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January 12, 2006

via FIRST-CLASS MAIL

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01-20-2006

U.S. Patent & TMO/TM Mail Rpt Dt. #11

Re: The United States Playing Card Company v. Harbro, LLC
Opposition No.: 91162078
Serial No.: 78/253725

Dear Honorable Sir:

Enclosed is the Opposer The United States Playing Card Company's Notice of Reliance Submitted in Rebuttal which was filed electronically today. As stated in the Notice, the attachments are included in this First Class mailing.

Kindly acknowledge receipt of the enclosures by stamping and returning the enclosed postcard.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lynda E. Roesch".

Lynda E. Roesch

LER:kw

Enclosure

cc: Timothy Flory, Esq.
Terrence J. Linn, Esq.
Kathryn K. Przywara, Esq.
Steven A. Abreu, Esq.

**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
BEFORE THE TRADEMARK TRIAL AND APPEAL BOARD**

**THE UNITED STATES PLAYING
CARD COMPANY,**

Opposer,

v.

HARBRO, LLC,

Applicant

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**Serial No. 78/253725
Opposition No. 91162078**



01-20-2006

U.S. Patent & TMO/TM Mail Rcpt Dt. #11

**OPPOSER THE UNITED STATES PLAYING
CARD COMPANY'S NOTICE OF RELIANCE
SUBMITTED IN REBUTTAL**

As required by 32 C.F.R. §2.122 and the Trademark Trial and Appeal Board Manual of Procedure (TBMP) Section 704.02, this Notice of Reliance serves to notify the opposing party, Harbro, LLC, that The United States Playing Card Company intends to rely in support of its case the materials hereunder and attached hereto (attachments sent via First Class Mail) in support of its case, all of which are available to the general public:

Publication	Date	Bates Nos.	Use/Reference
Bon Appétit	Sept., 2005	PC-01943 through PC-01956	
		PC-01945	... Vegas: The Second Wave
		PC-01949	As for Vegas, well, it isn't really a great restaurant city ...
		PC-01950	MGM Grand is the ultimate Vegas destination for savvy travelers ...

Publication	Date	Bates Nos.	Use/Reference
		PC-01951	More of what you come to Vegas for.
		PC-01953	Taste of Vegas
			Only Vegas™
			Only in Vegas can you experience ...
			Picture of a chef wearing an "Only Vegas" coat and flipping playing cards.
		PC-01954	Only Vegas.
			Only Vegas™
			What's Your Vegas Alibi?
			Picture of Emeril Lagasse wearing " Only Vegas" coat
			Picture of Daniel Voulud wearing " Only Vegas" coat and fanning playing cards
			Picture of Tom Moloney wearing " Only Vegas" coat
			Picture of Guy Savoy wearing "Only Vegas" coat and fanning playing cards.
			Picture of Jöel Robuchon wearing " Only Vegas" coat and flipping playing cards.
			Picture of Rock Moonen wearing " Only Vegas" coat
			"Taste of Vegas" with a chef's hat design to the right of each chef's name.
		PC-01955	Only Vegas™

Publication	Date	Bates Nos.	Use/Reference
			Rick Moonen: ...Things I Love Most About Vegas... Best Vegas Memory:
			Guy Savoy: ...Things I Love Most About Vegas ... Best Vegas Memory: ... Favorite Vegas Gaming Pastime:
			Daniel Boulud: ...Thing I Love Most About Vegas: Being In Vegas Today. ... Best Vegas Memory: In 1981, I Took First Trip To Vegas In An RV - That Is When I Discovered Vegas.
			Jöel Bobuchon: ...Thing I Love Most About Vegas ... Favorite Vegas Gaming Pastime:
			Tom Moloney: ...Thing I Love Most About Vegas ... Biggest Career Gamble: Moving From Florida To Vegas ... Favorite Vegas Gaming Pastime:
			Emeril Lagasse: ...Thing I Love Most About Vegas ... Best Vegas Memory: What Happens In Vegas, Stays In Vegas.
The Wall Street Journal	Oct. 22, 2005	PC-01956	Vegas The Second Wave ...
		PC-01957 through PC-01959	
		PC-01959	It's Our Vegas Sweepstakes!
			travelocity.com/vegas
			It's Our Vegas Sweepstakes!
			Only Vegas™

Publication	Date	Bates Nos.	Use/Reference
<i>National Geographic Traveler</i>	Oct. 2001	PC-01960 through PC-01962	
		PC-01962	... In Vegas our buildings are proud ...
			... before Walt opened the gates in Anaheim, he visited Vegas, ...
			... real estate is the tabula rasa on which Vegas immigrants ...
			... But in Vegas one never forgets the desert. ...
		 I doubt our Vegas Popsicle will melt anytime soon. ...
Gale Group, Inc. ASAP/Advanstar Communications, Inc. <i>Travel Agent</i> (available on LEXIS/NEXIS)	March 3, 2003	PC-01963 through PC-01965	... In London and Manchester, England, taxicabs were adorned with Vegas symbols, including images of playing cards and dice.
New York Times (available on Westlaw)	Jan. 30, 2004	PC-02603 through PC-02604	...CASINO CARDS--Deal from a deck of used playing cards from Las Vegas casinos that frequently replace their cards \$1.25 to \$1.75 a deck, all with casino logos. (866) 663-1445 www.homecasinogames.com ...
New York Times (available on Westlaw)	March 5, 2005	PC-02605 through PC-02606	...Michael Godard Fine Arts, a Las Vegas company that sells whimsical paintings and reproductions, featuring martini glasses, poker chips, playing cards...
New York Times (available on Westlaw)	Feb. 26, 2004	PC-02607 through PC-02608	...anyone who has ever played in Las Vegas or even a game of Go Fish has almost certainly played with the company's cards...

Publication	Date	Bates Nos.	Use/Reference
Fort Worth Star Telegram (available on Westlaw)	Oct. 3, 2004	PC-02609 through PC-02610	Slot machines, playing cards and even the famed Las Vegas skyline won't be on Nevada's quarter, much to the disappointment of state officials.
The Kansas City Star (available on LEXIS/NEXIS)	Nov. 28, 2000	PC-02611 through PC-02613	
		PC-02612	...The largest of the also-ran card makers is Las Vegas-based Paul-Son Gaming Corp...
		PC-02613	...Casinos cannot simply throw used cards away. State regulators typically require permanent destruction or defacing of each card to ensure that none pops out of the sleeve of a card cheat one day...
		PC-02613	...As a result, card recycling is a Las Vegas cottage industry. Baranowski said recyclers competed with one another for boxes of used cards that have been drilled through by the casinos or have had their corners clipped...
		PC-02613	...These entrepreneurs then hand-sort the cards back into complete decks for secondary sales as Las Vegas souvenirs...
Las Vegas Mini Rough Guide by Greg Ward	March, 2000	PC-02614 through PC-02626	
		PC-02619	...His greatest coup was to establish the <i>Horseshoe</i> as the permanent home of the World Series of Poker ...
		PC-02620	Blackjack is the most popular table game in Las Vegas...

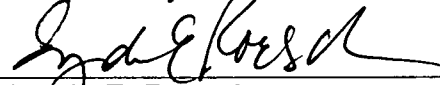
Publication	Date	Bates Nos.	Use/Reference
		PC-02622	... Poker is unique among Las Vegas card games in that gamblers play against each other...
			...Several [casinos] have begun to stage poker tournaments along the lines of the wildly successful, World Series of Poker held in April each year at Binion's <i>Horseshoe</i> downtown...
		PC-02624 through PC-02625	Gamblers General Store ...they have...packs of cards from all the casinos for .99¢
		PC-02626	Top twelve Las Vegas movies... <i>Honeymoon in Vegas</i> (1993)...
Frommers® Las Vegas 2006	2006	PC-02627 through PC-02641	
		PC-02629	Diagram of Blackjack table
		PC-02630	Display of cards in Poker Hands
		PC-02632	A Look Back at Vegas: No Tomorrow
			Best of Vegas After Dark
		PC-02633	Vegas on the Upswing
			Penn & Teller's Top 10 Things One Should Never Do In A Vegas Magic Show
			Recording Vegas
		PC-02635	...gambling is what Vegas is about...
			Almost everyone plays in Vegas...

Publication	Date	Bates Nos.	Use/Reference
		PC-02637	Blackjack
		PC-02639	POKER
			...In Las Vegas, poker is just about the biggest thing going
			...Just about every casino now has a poker room, and it's just a matter of time before the others catch up...
			Card sharks are not a rare species in Vegas...
			PAI GOW POKER
			CARIBBEAN STUD POKER
		PC-02640	3 CARD POKER
			...at least one table in major Vegas casinos...
		PC-02641	5 Souvenirs ...Bonanza Gift and Souvenir Shop , 2460 Las Vegas Blvd. S... It's the self-proclaimed "World's Largest Gift Shop"...all kinds of playing cards both new and used (casinos have to change decks frequently, so this where used packs go)...
			...the best place in Vegas for your comic-book needs.

TBMP §704.02 requires in some instances a statement on the relevance of the materials listed to the case. The materials above are relevant to demonstrate that the term "VEGAS" is used primarily to refer to the city of Las Vegas, Nevada, a well-known geographical location. This evidence rebuts

Applicant's argument that it should be allowed to register the term "VEGAS" because the registrations of other geographic locations, in Applicant's opinion, demonstrate that the term is not primarily geographic. These articles are also relevant to illustrate a connection between playing cards and the city of Las Vegas, NV. This evidence rebuts Applicant's argument that there is no connection between playing cards and the city of Las Vegas, NV. Applicant introduced evidence to try to show playing cards are not associated with Las Vegas because playing cards may be manufactured and purchased in other geographic locations.

Respectfully submitted,

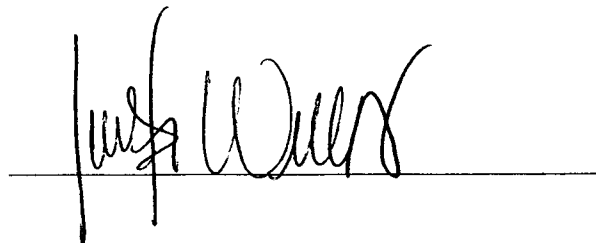


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ATTORNEY FOR OPPOSER
The United States Playing Card Company

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that a copy of the foregoing and the attachment was delivered via First Class Mail, on this 12th day of January, 2006 to Timothy Flory, Esq. and Terence J. Linn, Esq., Van Dyke, Gardner, Linn & Burkhardt, LLP, Suite 207, 2851 Charlevoix Drive SE, P.O. Box 888695 Grand Rapids, MI 49588-8695.

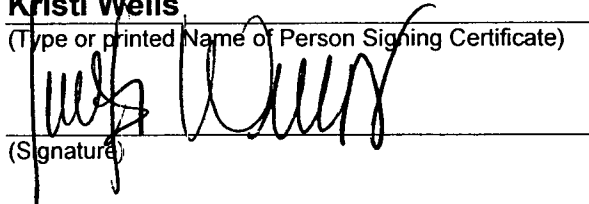


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Kristi Wells

(Type or printed Name of Person Signing Certificate)



(Signature)

January 12, 2006

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AMERICA'S TOP 5 RESTAURANT CITIES

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LAS VEGAS

NEW ORLEANS

Ancho-and-Coffee-Rubbed Beef
with Wild Mushroom Sauce
from Mesa Grill in Las Vegas

Plus

Restaurants—Where to Eat Now

PC-01943

12th Annual Restaurant Issue

113 America's Top 5 Restaurant Cities

They're at the top of their game—and each satisfies diners in its own distinctive way. Here's where to go when you visit, and here's what to cook from those menus at home.

114 A New Yorker's New York

At its core, Big Apple dining is all about the great neighborhood spot, from a funky Village bistro to a Thai joint in Queens. Check out our picks, then make the best recipes in town.

By Tanya Wenman Steel

126 Chicago: Their Kind of Town

Forget meat and potatoes. Some of the country's most innovative chefs are reinventing the restaurant scene here.

Taste the revolution.

By Raphael Kadushin

136 San Francisco: Foodie Central

This food-obsessed town finally has its one-stop culinary temple: The Ferry Building Marketplace. It's part farmers' market, part restaurant wonderland, and entirely delicious.

By Laurie Glenn Buckle ►

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148 The New New Orleans

Away from the French Quarter and its po'boys and jambalaya, a new generation of chefs are cooking up fresh takes on good old Cajun and Creole.

By Andrew Knowlton

158 Vegas: The Second Wave

A decade after the first restaurant boom, this one's even bigger and better—the world's top chefs are opening restaurants and serving these winning dishes.

By Heather John

Kitchen & Home

58 Table & Home® It's a Steal

Ever coveted a restaurant's stunning salt and pepper shakers? Now you can take them home—legally—with this buying guide to tableware from some of the country's hottest spots.

By Laurie Glenn Buckle

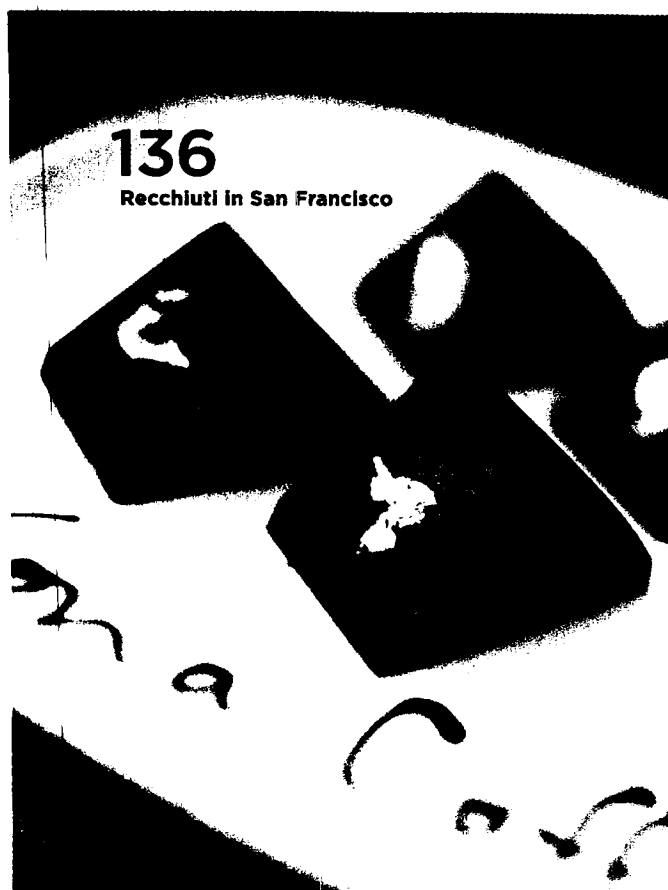
96 Favorites: Opening Acts

Take a bite from the most successful new restaurants in the country. Each one has a unique dip with it.

These are hot, good.

By Laurie Glenn Buckle >

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from La Petite



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About the Cover

Ancho-and-Coffee-Rubbed Filet Mignon with

Ancho-Mushroom Sauce, page 166. Photography by

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Food styling by Basil Friedman.

Prop styling by Robin Turk.

Have a question about a recipe, or a comment? Call Reader Service at 323-965-3696, or contact the editorial offices: *Bon Appétit*, 6300 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90048. For subscriptions and changes of address, call 800-765-9419 (515-433-5019 from outside the U.S.A.) or send e-mail to: subscriptions@bonappetit.com. Printed in the U.S.A.

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PC-01948

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“Why these five?”

That's the first question we knew you would ask. Why the enduring attraction of New York, Chicago, San Francisco, New Orleans? And why—seemingly all of a sudden—is Las Vegas on the list? And why not Los Angeles, where *Bon Appétit* editorial is based?

Whew. A lot of questions, indeed.

However, as you may have guessed, we are quite well prepared to answer them (and the staff became quite well fed along the way). With regard to the first four cities, so much has been written about the restaurants there that it was very

important to us to make the point about what aspect of these locales is special *right now*. These four don't only endure; they continually morph (deliciously), reinvent themselves, and satisfy unconditionally. You'll learn more about how in the section beginning on page 113.

As for Vegas, well, it isn't really a great restaurant city “seemingly all of a sudden.” In fact, what we're seeing there is actually the *second* wave of the celebrity chef invasion that began in the early '90s and continued to gain momentum. (Not to toot our own horn, but...*Bon Appétit* named Las Vegas “Destination of the Year” in our January 2000 issue. We have been reporting on the scene for a long time.)

Then, the L.A. question. You're right. It is a little weird that our home base doesn't have as high a profile as it did in the late '70s and '80s, when it helped lead the revolution in California-influenced cooking and cuisine. L.A. is in a mellow zone right now, with a lot of steak and Italian food, and small-plates-type places—clubby restaurants and trattorias that comfort and make for a very enjoyable evening out. Where L.A. does still lead the way is sushi—we excel in it, really—and in the article that begins on page 65 you'll find out about some of the best places to try it.

Boston and Philadelphia also get their due in articles in the front of the magazine. Actually, there are 23 cities covered in this issue other than the Top 5. So we're not stuck on the Top 5. Dwelling maybe, but not stuck.

Remember, too, that even if you don't agree with our choices, dozens of chefs have provided dozens of recipes here for you to try at home. They make for fun mixing and matching for a dinner-party menu. After the reading, the proof really is in the eating. Sitting down to, for instance, a big bowl of Drunken Noodles from Sripraphai in New York, or beer-battered mahi-mahi tacos from Mijita in San Francisco, or a plate of sensational rabbit étouffée with cheese grits from Jacques-Imo's in New Orleans, is a great way to start the debate among friends. Between bites, you can discuss it.

Besides, it's not polite to talk with your mouth full.

Barbara Fairchild EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

PC-01949

With its ultra-deluxe accommodations, lavish spa facilities and top-tier entertainment, **MGM Grand** is the ultimate Vegas destination for savvy travelers who want to be thrilled on all levels. But for discriminating gourmands, it's the food that takes center stage. With an all-star lineup of world-class chefs at the helm of some of the most creative dining spots on the Strip, diners are dealt a winning hand of culinary options.



THE CUL MGM

JACK A

The newest attraction is **Shibuya**. Chef **Eiji Takase**'s inventive interpretation of "traditional modern" cuisine brings forth sumptuous creations like kobe beef tataki with shichimi onions and miso wild salmon in lotus root and ginger sauce. Sake sommelier **Eric Swanson** serves as an expert guide through an astonishing selection of sakes that can be paired with a nightly chef's tasting menu or enjoyed in innovative sake-infused cocktails.

At **Diego**, the bold flavors of traditional Mexican food are updated with sophisticated dining sensibilities. Riffs on favorite Mexican dishes like wood-oven roasted chicken with Oaxacan red mole, *carne asada*, and a salsa cart share the menu with a selection of over 75 bottles of tequila, collected by tequila master **Julio Bermego**.

Carnivores will revel at **Craftsteak**, James Beard Award-winning chef **Tom Colicchio**'s elevated steakhouse that celebrates the uncommon pleasures of eating top-notch ingredients simply prepared under an expert hand. **Fiamma Trattoria**, the stylish outpost of the critically acclaimed New York restaurant, is an ode to sophisticated Italian cuisine.

Seablue's dramatic décor of cascading water sets the tone for **Michael Mina**'s hyper-fresh, innovative seafood creations, while Mina's other outpost, **Nobhill**, offers a taste of the wonders of San Francisco dining. **Emeril Lagasse's New Orleans Fish House** fuses classic Creole dishes with Emeril's unmistakable "kicked-up" interpretations. Authentic haute-Chinese is featured at **Pearl**, where seasonal dishes are paired with a selection from a trolley of excellent Chinese teas prepared tableside. For casual dining that doesn't compromise on quality, **Wolfgang Puck Bar & Grill** serves the chef's famous wood-oven pizzas, pastas and grilled fish.

For Las Vegas food lovers, the restaurants at MGM Grand are the best show in town. For more information about Las Vegas getaways for serious foodies, visit www.mgmgrand.com or call 877-880-0880.

PC-01950

EVERYTHING IN MODERATION? YEAH, RIGHT.



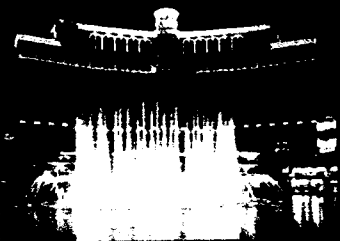
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How often you've dreamed of the fun of establishing itself as a world-class destination for good food, sophisticated nightlife and unbridled entertainment. And now, thanks to the launch of the "Team of Vegas" Celebrity Chef Card, you can. Each featuring the A-list chefs who contribute to the city's already rich, in 2006, the roster of talent will be a first-of-its-kind into a culinary hall of fame.

All-star Emeril Lagasse tempts the crowds with his sinfully delicious cooking and an authentic taste of New Orleans; Michelin-starred chef Guy Savoy offers superb, imaginative Parisian fare; Tom Moloney cooks up the classics, as well as contemporary creations with California-inspired seafood; superstar Daniel Boulud shares his mastery of French cuisine with a menu of modern brasserie fare; Mexican food gets a modern makeover from Richard Sandoval; direct from NYC, Rick Moonen flavors the Strip with his take on the best in seafood; and rounding out the heavy-hitters is Joël Robuchon, a renowned genius known for his magical cuisine and pursuit of perfection.

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Only in Vegas can you experience the culinary magic of all of these chefs, all in one place. And only on www.vegas.com can you find the recipes for their signature Las Vegas dishes. Log on now!



PC-01953

WHAT'S YOUR VEGAS ALIBI?

Strip Steak? Clams Casino? Find out

how these chefs answered this question.

DU
Vegas



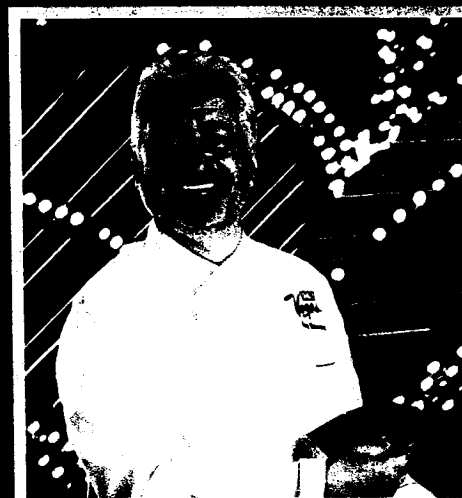
EMERIL LAGASSE
EMERIL'S NEW ORLEANS FISH HOUSE



DANIEL BOULUD
DANIEL BOULUD BRASSERIE



TOM MOLONEY
AQUAKNOX



GUY SAVOY
RESTAURANT GUY SAVOY



JOËL ROBUCHON
L'ATELIER DE JOËL ROBUCHON



RICK MOONEN
RM SEAFOOD



Fleur de Lys

MANDALAY BAY

This page: Chef Hubert Keller.

Opposite: The stunning dining room,
with a view of the 12,000-bottle "cellar."

Vegas

the second wave

Sin City is really cooking. A whole new crew
of celebrity chefs is shaking up the restaurant
scene once again—with delicious results.

PC-01956

The New Face of Baseball

This World Series, Latino dominance takes center stage

PURSUIITS/Sports|P6



Putting Your Foot Down

With flats making a comeback, our heel-loving columnist goes on a spree

PURSUIITS/Style|P4



Tender Is The Chicken

Two ways, plain and fancy, to give your bird a milk bath

PURSUIITS/Cooking|P10

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

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WEEKEND EDITION

\$1.50 • ****

VOL. CXXLVI NO. 85

SATURDAY/SUNDAY, OCTOBER 22 • 23, 2005

WSJ.com

What's News—

Business and Finance

U.S. PROSECUTORS charged Texas oil man Oscar Wyatt and two Swiss executives with secretly paying millions of dollars in kickbacks to Saddam Hussein's government. The charges mark an escalation of the probe into the U.N. program that let the former Iraqi leader sell oil in exchange for food and medicine. (Article on Page A3)

Oil supplies may start tightening as early as next month, the IEA's executive director warned, citing hurricane damage to facilities and a possible rebound in demand. (Article on Page A3)

Mississippi and Louisiana lost a total of 310,000 jobs last month due to the hurricanes. Elsewhere, the job market appeared healthy. (Article on Page A3)

Caterpillar's net rose 34% on a 17% revenue increase. But the results trailed Wall Street forecasts, sending shares down 9.5%. (Article on Page A3)

World-Wide

SYRIA RISKED further isolation after a U.N. probe of Hariri's death. A push for international sanctions may follow the investigation that implicated high-ranking Syrian officials in the former Lebanese prime minister's assassination. Syrian and Lebanese officials criticized the report, while Bush and Rice called for accountability. Bolton said he would confer with the Security Council, which plans to address the matter Tuesday. France and Arab governments may play pivotal roles in the response to Damascus. (Column 6)

Florida residents began vacating the Keys and some mainland areas ahead of Hurricane Wilma's arrival. The Category 4 storm battered Mexican resorts, and tourists sought refuge in hotel ballrooms and emergency shelters as water filled the streets. Forecasters now predict Wilma will achieve landfall in Florida on Monday, possibly with diminished strength.

An Iraqi defense lawyer turned up dead on a street following his Baghdad kidnapping Thursday. The attorney was one of Hussein's co-defendants in the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

How 'Wicked' Cast Its Spell

The Broadway musical took a page from Hollywood, turning a troubled show into a marketing machine.

By Brooks Barnes

'WICKED' had flop written all over it when it opened on Broadway in 2003. Empty seats dotted the theater. Ad-



Harsh Report From U.N. Puts Pressure on Syria

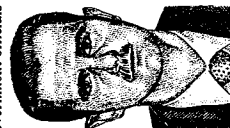
U.S. Urges World to Ponder 'Accountability' for Charges; Damascus Assails Findings

By Bill Spindler

DAMASCUS, Syria—The United Nations probe implicating high-ranking Syrian officials in the killing of Lebanese leader Rafik Hariri could ignite a drive for international sanctions next week and pose the biggest challenge yet for the tight-knit Damascus regime.

The Syrian government denounced the report as full of "false accusations aimed at weakening and embarrassing the nation politically, in Lebanon, where current and former government officials allegedly carried out the assassination," pro-Syrian President Emile Lahoud criticized the report as well.

U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan asked U.N.-appointed investigator Detlev Mehlis, who submitted the report Thursday, to continue investigating until mid-De-



Bashar Assad

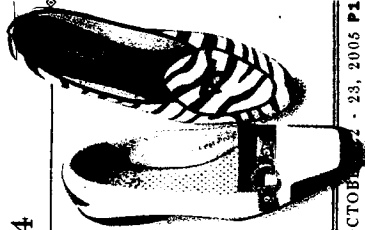
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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

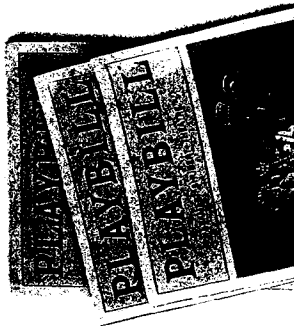
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SATURDAY/SUNDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2005 P.1



THEATER P3



'Spamalot'? Pay
A Lot. Broadway
Tickets Hit \$110

GARDEN P9



The New Face of Baseball

With the rise of the
Chicago White Sox,
Latino dominance
takes center stage.



ENTERTAINMENT & CULTURE

SPECIAL ADVERTISING FEATURE

Provocative Vegas Dazzles the Discerning

Meet Las Vegas, the destination for sophisticates. George Carlin, Dame Edna, Jon Stewart and Dennis Miller poke fun at politics, social convention and the absurdities of contemporary life. Headliners are mega-stars like Celine Dion, Dave Matthews, Elton John, U2 and the Rolling Stones. The Tony-award-winning hit Avenue Q makes its only appearance outside of New York in Las Vegas; Broadway hits including *Spamalot*, *Mamma Mia!*, *Hairspray* and *Phantom of the Opera* are on stage or soon to open. And Mel Brooks sightings around town have prompted rumors that *The Producers* will open here as well.

Las Vegas has always had its glamorous side, but the city that is continually reinventing itself has an edgy coolness today. The players that power Las Vegas are as competitive as they are creative and keep pushing each other to new levels of excellence. One example: the shift to hotels that are opulent temples of luxury and fantasy. The Robb Report, that arbiter of the ultimate for the discerning, last year named a Las Vegas hotel the world's best of the best hotels. In entertainment, when the dazzling, otherworldly Cirque du Soleil debuted here more than a decade ago, naysayers said it was too high-brow. Instead, it was a smash hit, spawning ever more provocative shows. Productions like the Blue Man Group, which just opened a new show here, also helped pave the way for others to keep pushing the envelope for entertainment.

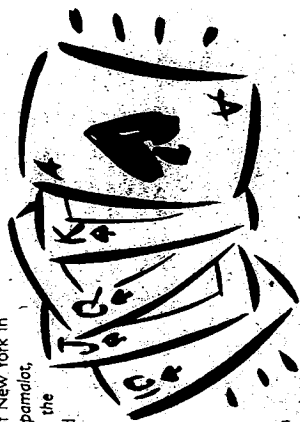
The restaurant scene has undergone a similar transformation. While gourmet rooms were always a staple for high rollers, Vegas today is a culinary capital with three AAA five-diamond restaurants. Big-name chefs such as Alain Ducasse, Susan Feniger and Mary Sue Milliken of the Food Network, Emeril Lagasse, Wolfgang Puck, Jean-Georges Vongerichten and Joel Robuchon are just a few of the top chefs who have restaurants in Las Vegas.

Las Vegas has become a major golf destination, with more than 60 private and public golf courses designed by the likes of Jack Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer and Pete Dye. Spas and golf go hand in hand — Las Vegas has 30 pampering spas.

Even with all of these changes, Vegas remains true to itself with classic stars such as Tony Bennett and Wayne Newton, Mr. Las Vegas himself. Anyone looking for lounge shows and glittered and feathered showgirls can still enjoy those perennial favorites.

Gambling, the core of Las Vegas, has gone through its own evolution. Poker is now a spectator sport as well as a table game, thanks to programming such as ESPN's *World Series of Poker*, casino-based dramas such as NBC's *Las Vegas* and celebrity poker tournaments. Capitalizing on the game's new élan, casinos have opened new poker rooms—and offer lessons for novices to ease them into their new sport.

Las Vegas, the town that invented 24/7—keeps upping the ante for fun.



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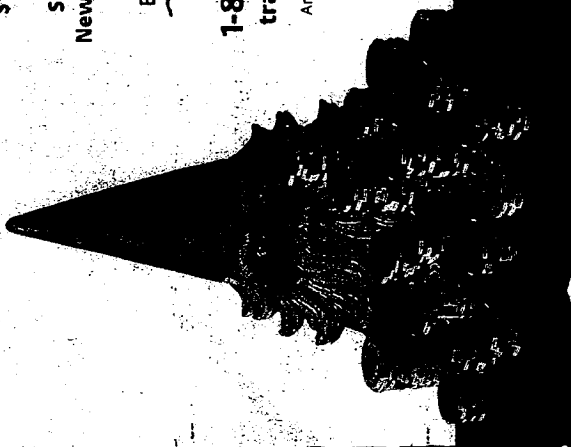
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SPECIAL
COLLECTOR'S ISSUE

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC TRAVELER

WHERE THE JOURNEY BEGINS

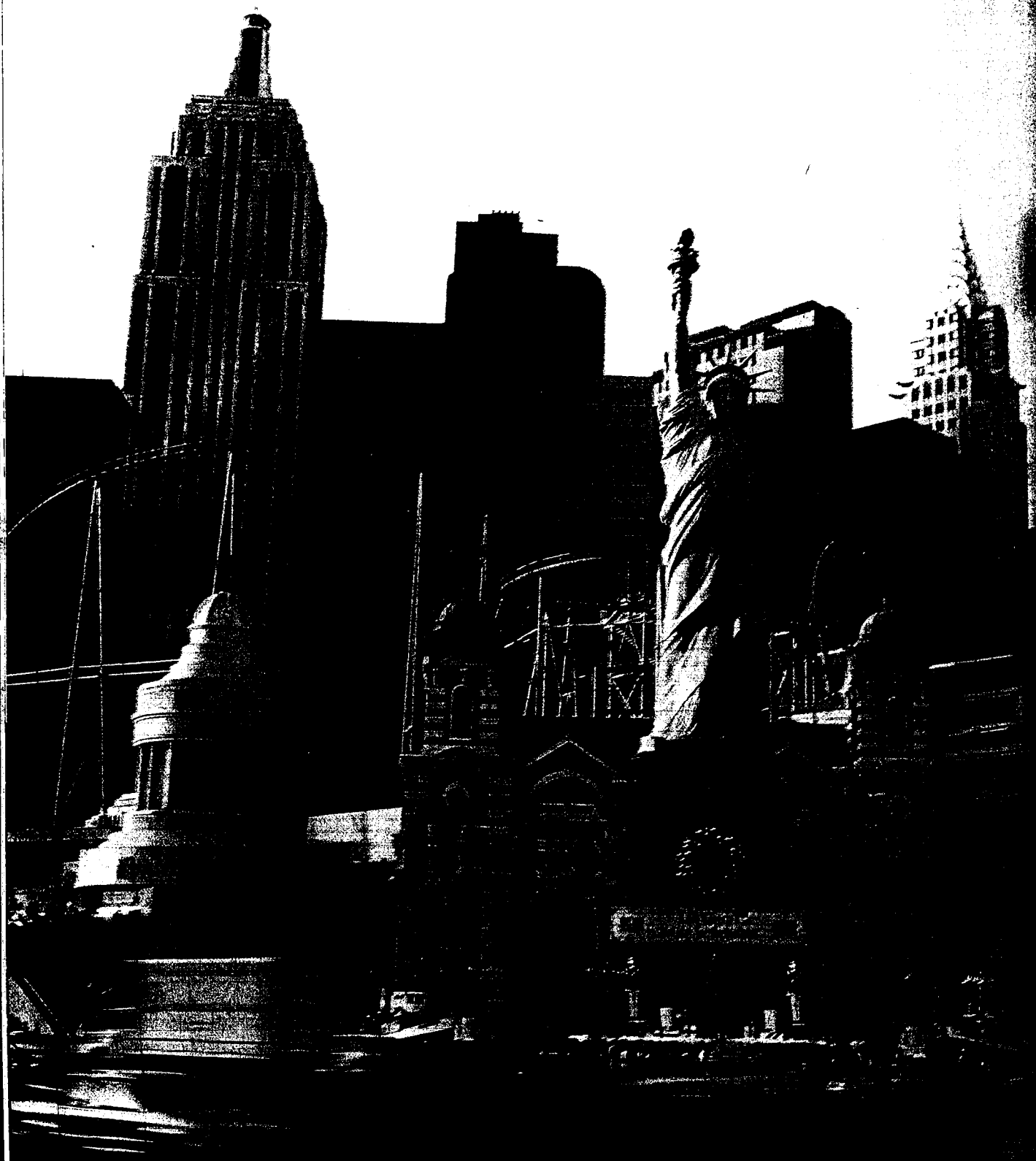
October 2001 • nationalgeographic.com • \$4.95

50 PLACES OF A LIFETIME AMERICA



URBAN SPACES • WILD PLACES • PARADISE FOUND
COUNTRY UNBOUND • NATIONAL WONDERS

PC-01960



Luck be a lady: Hotels such as New York-New York lure customers with over-the-top themed architecture. Marriage is also a big business (*opposite*); last year, 120 274 couples got married in Clark County.

PC-01961

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LAS VEGAS

A city of eye candy, with a dash of spice, rising from the Mojave. By Teller

LAS VEGAS IS A POPSICLE, a frosty man-made treat defying the blistering Mojave sun. Sustained by imported water, artificial refrigeration, and a cultivated taste for sweets, our desert dessert has no natural ingredients. Las Vegas exists because it's fun, and because it can.

Our Popsicle's stick is the Las Vegas Strip—a monumental midway spawning pleasure palaces in a swath nearly seven miles long. Here, form follows function with a vengeance. We want to entice, so we build a sugar-candy castle, or a pyramid iced with a light so bright

that astronauts spot it from outer space, or a Roman temple that sucks in the suckers on a one-way moving sidewalk like a Venus flytrap. Of course, skyscrapers in more reputable cities serve the same end: to seduce. But there puritanical "good taste" binds the voluptuous message in corsets of abstract masonry. In Vegas our buildings are proud hookers in spandex and spike heels.

I love the honesty of the Strip. From the moment you step off your plane our billboards promise—in glowing but indisputable terms—that our casinos will give you nothing for your money. You will bathe in glitz, gluttony, and lust—and maybe even see a witty magic show (hint). But when you get back on your plane, you will not be bringing home the bacon. You will have been taken, and will love us for it.

Nothing here is real except your money. There are no muggers in our New York New York, no cholera in the tap water at our Venetian. The staff of our Paris is neither stinky nor rude.

Sound like Disneyland? Well, sure, but remember that before Walt opened the gates in Anaheim, he visited Vegas, already budding with theme hotels and even a theme park—the Frontier Hotel's Last Frontier Village—complete with pony rides and bumper cars. So in stealing from Walt, maybe we're getting back a little of our own.

After a day of biting the heads off live pigeons, performers in a sideshow retire behind the carnival banners to cozy mobile

VITAL STATS

Location: Clark County, Nevada **Size:** 83 square miles **Population:** 1.4 million in 2000, up from 8,422 in 1940 **Number of visitors:** 36.2 million in 2000 **Notable:** Gambling was legalized in 1931. Eighty-five percent of visitors gambled in 2000 and each spent an average of \$665 per visit.

homes with chintz curtains and satellite TV. Likewise, after a day of pampering losers, the 200,000-odd knights, gondoliers, demoiselles, and Cleopatras of the Vegas midway retreat to vast manufactured communities of stucco-and-tile tract homes set in lush landscapes of irrigated greenery.


As many as 6,000 refugees from the cold and dark and cramped move to Las Vegas every month. Here, for the price of a Manhattan rat hole, they bloom among palm trees and porte cocheres. Cheap desert real estate is the tabula rasa on which Vegas immigrants write their future.

But in Vegas one never forgets the desert. Its bony mountains loom over our oasis. Its sun sears our skin and our corneas. Its scorpions crawl onto our pillows and remind us that we are only a glass of water and a kilowatt away from eternity.

Though I imagine the desert will prevail again someday, I doubt our Vegas Popsicle will melt any time soon. Boomtowns become ghost towns only when they are mined out. Fun, folly, and the longing for a fresh start are a very deep vein of gold.

Las Vegas-based TELLER is the shorter, quieter half of the duo Penn & Teller, which has been performing magic for more than 25 years.



Source: [News & Business > News > News, All \(English, Full Text\)](#) 

Terms: "gale group" and "advanstar communications" and "march 3, 2003" and "las vegas" and cards ([Edit Search](#) | [Suggest Terms for My Search](#))

Dealing with problems: Las Vegas airs the challenges it faces and how it plans to address them; Destination: Las Vegas. Travel Agent March 3, 2003

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Travel Agent

March 3, 2003

SECTION: No. 9, Vol. 311; Pg. 70; ISSN: 1053-9360

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LENGTH: 874 words

HEADLINE: Dealing with problems: **Las Vegas** airs the challenges it faces and how it plans to address them; Destination: **Las Vegas**.

BYLINE: Weiss, Elizabeth

BODY:

The "new normalcy" facing **Las Vegas** following the events of Sept. 11, 2001, is fraught with challenges, says Manny Cortez, president and CEO of the **Las Vegas** Convention and Visitors Authority (LVCVA). Speaking at the Preview **Las Vegas: Know Beyond the Now** event hosted by the **Las Vegas** Chamber of Commerce, Cortez and other tourism officials discussed the decline in international travel, the potential for war with Iraq and competition from California and other states.

Of the 48 states with some form of legalized gambling, 17 are within a 250-mile radius of **Las Vegas**. Most intimidating is the tremendous growth of indian casinos in California, a crucial market for **Las Vegas** travel, in the Los Angeles area alone, there are nine indian gaming properties poised to generate nearly 46 million gaming visits by 2005. Northern California has 18 properties, tagged to bring in 12 million gaming visits in the same time frame. The **Las Vegas** Review Journal recently reported the number of trips per year made by Southern California residents in 2002 dipped to 2.1, down from three the previous year. Calif. Gov. Gray Davis is poised to renegotiate tribal compacts this month, which could lead to significantly more leeway in the number of slots in Indian casinos, which would place further pressure on **Las Vegas**.

DISTINCT PERSONALITY

Identifying and promoting **Las Vegas** as a brand will be foremost on the LVCVA's agenda in 2003. With the launch of its Vegas Stories advertising campaign in January, the authority sought to create a personality for **Las Vegas** that is exciting, sexy, safely dangerous, playfully mischievous, evocatively sensual and confidently defiant. Some other buzz words--live your unexpressed life--lie at the heart of the tag line to the leave-you-guessing television commercials: "What happens here, stays here." Rob Powers, spokesperson for the LVCVA, says that travel agents are speaking of increased bookings to **Las Vegas**. Whether that is a result of the advertisement is too soon to tell, Powers says.

This newly defined branding will be used to lure international travelers back to **Las Vegas**. Visitation from this much sought-after market has been on the decline since its peak at 19

PC-01963

percent of total visitors in 1997. Preliminary numbers for last year show that overseas travelers made up only 8 percent of the total visitation. Cortez noted that "the future [of **Las Vegas**] is in the international marketplace," a fact that has spurred a variety of targeted advertising efforts around the globe. In London and Manchester, England, taxicabs were adorned with Vegas symbols, including images of playing **cards** and dice. The Queen Mother herself got in on the fun in a British ad for **Las Vegas** showing her shooting craps. Indicators from international air service--much of which has rebounded since Sept. 11, 2001--look good. with nonstop flights having resumed from Tokyo last March, new service on Singapore Air as of last August, and two flights a week from London, 16 from Canada and 24 from Mexico. Seasonal service is also available from Frankfurt.

Customer satisfaction issues are also going to be addressed in the coming months, including the widening of I-15, the main route of travel between Los Angeles and **Las Vegas**, dubbed "the longest parking lot in the world" by frustrated commuters. Some \$ 500 million has been spent since 1990, and dollars continue to be pumped into the project to make Southern Californians and others more apt to travel this crucial artery. In addition, McCarran international Airport is under continued development in order to better accommodate international and domestic flights. Once travelers have made it to town, the monorail project--designed to stretch from the Sahara to Bally's--ought to make it considerably easier to get around. The monorail is in the test stages and is scheduled to open for public use in 2004.


Also at the Preview **Las Vegas** event, R. Keith Schwer, director of the University of **Las Vegas**' Center for Business and Economic Research, spoke of the continued growth of the city's lodging sector, noting that the "build it and they will come" mentality still holds true. The number of rooms in **Las Vegas** has grown sharply in the past five years, and by 2004, Schwer noted, the room inventory in **Las Vegas** will have grown by an additional 1.9 percent, to 130,000.

Gaming, still the cornerstone of **Las Vegas**' allure, says Schwer, has also shown modest growth, rising up from the 0.46 percent decline in 2001. Gaming revenue is expected to increase by 2.3 percent in 2003 and another 2.9 percent in 2004. Visitor volume, too, should see a slight boost. Recent reports from the LVCVA indicate that visitor volume in 2002 saw a slight increase (0.2 percent) over 2001 numbers, but is still far below 2000's totals. According to Schwer, the number of visitors to the city should rise 1.8 percent in 2003 and another 2.1 percent in 2004. These are modest numbers, but encouraging given the current economic climate.

Cortez agrees that **Las Vegas** shows a great deal of promise in 2003 and beyond, not the least of which is a flexible marketing strategy that allows for swift modifications according to the whims of the marketplace.

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PC-01964

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The New York Times

1/30/04 NYT F2

Page 1

1/30/04 N.Y. Times F2
2004 WLNR 5526636

New York Times (NY)
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January 30, 2004

Section: F

Shopping List Poker Night

WENDY KNIGHT

Shopping List column on new items for playing poker at home; photos (M)

THIS winter, while the snow is falling and the temperatures are plummeting, hunker down with friends for a Saturday night of poker. With the right accouterments, like a Montecristo in one hand and a glass of whiskey in the other, you can pretend you're among the new breed of young card sharks racking up big wins in Las Vegas. WENDY KNIGHT

Photos: TABLE SETTING -- The cherry octagon table by Trinity Tables features a padded playing area of wool-nylon billiard fabric, lined chip trays and drink holders. It accommodates eight side chairs or four armchairs. The table, 55 inches wide and 30 inches high, comes with a top for use as a dining table. \$1,495. (888) 833-5480. www.trinitytables.com; ALL SET -- The Michael Graves Game is a cherry-finish octagon holder with slots for its 240 poker chips and 2 decks of cards. A polished steel handle makes it easy to carry the roughly 9-pound set to your next venue. \$39.99. (800) 440-0680 www.target.com; CASINO CARDS -- Deal from a deck of used **playing cards** from Las Vegas casinos that frequently replace their cards \$1.25 to \$1.75 a deck, all with casino logos. (866) 663-1445 www.homecasino games.com; MIX 'EM UP -- Keep the game honest with a card shuffler -- it eliminates deck-fixing and sore wrists. A one-to-two deck shuffler is \$10.95. (866) 663-1445 www.homecasino games.com

---- INDEX REFERENCES ----

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Language: EN

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1/30/04 NYT F2

Page 2

LIST POKER; TRINITY TABLES) (Cards and Card Games; Poker (Card Game))

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The New York Times

3/5/05 NYT B3

Page 1

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2005 WLNR 3354692

New York Times (NY)

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March 5, 2005

Section: B

Go-Go Dancer at Art Expo Raises Ruckus, and Eyebrows

RANDY KENNEDY

ArtExpo New York organizers complain that Michael Godard Fine Arts company's booth, featuring scantily-clad go-go dancer dancing in a cage, is distracting to other art dealers, igniting minor dispute between Godard and Expo; Godard complains of censorship; organizers say his art is fine but his entertainment is nuisance; photo (M)

The question has probably not been asked very many times in the art world: Are a go-go dancer in a cage and two costumed dwarves -- one dressed as an olive and the other as a grape -- really art?

Or are they simply shameless, and annoying, promotional props that should be booted from the Javits Convention Center, where over the last two days they have become a noticeable feature of Artexpo New York 2005, a vast gathering of artists, dealers and collectors.

The dancer and the dwarves were hired by Michael Godard Fine Arts, a Las Vegas company that sells whimsical paintings and reproductions, featuring martini glasses, poker chips, **playing cards** and other subjects from the high life. Mr. Godard claims in his promotional materials to be "the No. 1 selling artist in the world."

But on Thursday, the operators of Artexpo complained, telling the employees at the Godard booth that the go-go dancer, wearing shorts and a midriff-baring shirt and gyrating in a cage, was distracting to other art dealers, as were the costumed dwarves and music blaring from the booth.

David Smith, president of the Godard company, complained back bitterly, saying that he had paid \$52,000 for a large booth space and accusing the expo of trying to censor Mr. Godard's art.

"I said, 'Where is the censorship going to stop?'" Mr. Smith said yesterday. "Are

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3/5/05 NYT B3

Page 2

you going to say that we can't have nude portraits in here anymore? This is crazy."

The convention's managers, according to Mr. Smith, threatened to eject the dancer and a kind of standoff ensued. It continued yesterday.

Mr. Smith bought a black shower curtain, wrote "Censored by Artexpo" across it and draped it around the dancer's cage. After the convention manager complained again, Mr. Smith shortened the message to simply "Censored." At one point he asked the dancer to sit in the cage reading the Bible. He also said that the dancer had put on a few more clothes, though a spokesman for the convention, Sean-Patrick Hillman, disputed that yesterday.

"I haven't seen any evidence of more clothes," he said.

Mr. Hillman insisted that no one had any intention of censoring Mr. Godard's art at the convention, where more than 1,000 dealers have gathered. "He was playing obnoxiously loud music," Mr. Hillman said. "He was asked nicely three times to turn down his music. He was asked nicely to have what looked like a stripper -- a go-go dancer, I guess -- she was asked to put on a little more clothing."

He added: "It's not his artwork that's being censored. It's his entertainment that's being questioned. It basically creates a difficult environment for the people around him." (Mr. Godard himself was absent for much of this dispute, spending time with his friend Vince Neil, the lead singer for Motley Crue, Mr. Smith said.)

Mr. Hillman said that Mr. Godard would probably not be kicked out of the convention if he kept up the go-go show but that he might "lose his position in future shows if this is the kind of behavior that he uses to promote himself."

Mr. Smith said he did not plan to give in. "Art's a pretty stuffy world," he said. "But this is crazy."

Photo: Michael Godard at a go-go dancer's cage at Artexpo New York 2005. The cage was covered with a black shower curtain after complaints. (Photo by Heidi Schumann for The New York Times)

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COMPANY TERMS: MICHAEL GODARD FINE ARTS

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February 26, 2004

Section: C

A Deal That Involves Playing With Far More Than a Full Deck

ANDREW ROSS SORKIN

United States Playing Card Co, maker of playing card brands like Bicycle and Hoyle, is being sold to Jarden Corp for \$232 million; photo (M)

If there was any question that deal making is in the cards, here is an acquisition that is just that.

The maker of playing card brands like Bicycle and Hoyle is being sold to the Jarden Corporation, a conglomerate of niche businesses, for \$232 million. The business, the **United States Playing Card Company**, is the largest playing card company in the world, making cards also under the brands of Bee and Aviator.

Anyone who has ever played in **Las Vegas** or even a game of Go Fish has almost certainly played with the company's cards. The company was also one of the main sellers of reproductions of the Defense Department's "most wanted" cards of 55 leaders of the Iraqi regime.

The deal, which will be announced today, is the latest in a string of acquisitions by Jarden, a publicly traded company worth nearly \$1 billion. Jarden, based in Rye, N.Y., makes toothpicks, kitchen matches, plastic cutlery and Ball home canning jars, among other products.

Martin E. Franklin, the chief executive of Jarden, said the strategy holding his far-flung empire of all things mundane together was his interest in buying companies that have high cash flow and dominate their market.

"Cash is king for us," he said, adding that the **United States Playing Card Company** is "the quintessential dominate player in a niche market." Mr. Franklin said that the playing card company, which has \$130 million in annual revenue, and was founded in 1876, has been on his radar for more than a year and was once owned by his father, Roland Franklin.

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His father was a longtime partner of Sir James Goldsmith, the flamboyant British-French financier known for acquiring and breaking up companies, who died in 1997.

Martin Franklin said he was hoping to take advantage of the renewed interest in poker driven in part by television shows like Bravo's "Celebrity Poker Showdown" and expand the business in Europe and Asia.

He also hopes to bolster the company's growth by expanding its licensing program and other games business; the company already makes Nascar branded cards and others.

Photo: Cheryl Green inspected cards at the **United States Playing Card** Company in Norwood, Ohio, near Cincinnati. The company makes Bee, Aviator, Bicycle and Hoyle brands, plus the 55-card set of Iraqi leaders. (Photo by Mark Lyons for The New York Times)

----- INDEX REFERENCES -----

COMPANY: JARDEN CORP

REGION: (Middle East (1MI23); USA (1US73); Americas (1AM92); Ohio (1OH35); North America (1NO39); Iraq (1IR87); Arab States (1AR46))

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October 3, 2004

Section: A

No gambling images on coins

Slot machines, **playing cards** and even the famed Las **Vegas** skyline won't be on Nevada's quarter, much to the disappointment of state officials. State ...

Slot machines, **playing cards** and even the famed Las **Vegas** skyline won't be on Nevada's quarter, much to the disappointment of state officials.

State Treasurer Brian Krolicki said Friday that federal officials prohibited the use of gambling images on the five themes his office submitted to the U.S. Mint for the quarter that goes into circulation in January 2006.

The Las Vegas skyline was ruled out because it would show commercial gaming businesses.

Krolicki said the concern was that some people strongly oppose gambling and might be offended by a Nevada gambling design.

More than 500 proposals for the Nevada quarter were submitted to Krolicki, who chairs the state quarter panel. The panel whittled that down to wild horse, miner, bristlecone pine, snowcapped mountain and bighorn sheep themes.

U.S. Mint engravers will produce coin designs by the end of January.

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Playing card company battles for market share Casinos keep Blue Springs competitor busy in fierce fight for contracts Kansas City Star (Kansas & Missouri) November 28, 2000, Tuesday

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HEADLINE: Playing card company battles for market share Casinos keep Blue Springs competitor busy in fierce fight for contracts

BYLINE: RICK ALM; The Kansas City Star

BODY:

Like an army struggling for battlefield terrain inch by inch, Blue Springs-based Gemaco Playing Card Co. is in a price war, fighting for market share, casino by casino.

"The competition is definitely fierce," Gemaco General Manager Tom Baranowski said of bigger, older and better-known **U.S. Playing Card** Co. The 133-year-old Cincinnati company makes such recognizable brands as Bicycle, Aviator and Bee.

The two privately held competitors have pretty much locked up the U.S. casino market.

Gemaco runs round-the-clock shifts to keep up with orders for its estimated 35 percent market share. Baranowski said **U.S. Playing Card** controlled almost all of the rest and was still growing.

In the past year, **U.S. Playing Card** has outbid Gemaco in its own back yard, capturing longtime Gemaco clients Station Casino Kansas City, Argosy Riverside Casino and the Isle of Capri, formerly the Flamingo Hilton Casino.

But Gemaco isn't standing still. The company has staged raids into **Las Vegas**, where **U.S. Playing Card** traditionally dominates, recently winning contracts for the new Aladdin Casino, Baranowski said.

PC-02611

The company also is actively working emerging California tribal casinos and lucrative Asian markets and is expanding with new

products, including table game "layouts," the printed felt playing surfaces for such games as blackjack and craps.

Casinos typically bid for card suppliers every two years or more, Baranowski said. With industry consolidation shrinking the number of casino companies these days, "it's getting tougher," he said.

"The pressure to reduce prices puts pressure on everybody," he said. "That's where the war comes in."

Casinos' purchasing decisions are based largely on price, said John V. Finamore, Midwest president for Station Casinos Inc.

When Gemaco earlier this year lost Station's four-year national contract to **U.S. Playing Card**, Finamore said, the price differential was "pennies per deck."

But Station's Missouri and Nevada casinos consume more than 800,000 decks a year.

"That adds up to a lot of money," Finamore said.

"I felt bad," Finamore said of Gemaco's loss. "They make quality cards. The company has a good track record and they're local, of course.

"But it's like any business - the big guy has to do whatever he needs to do."

The big guy - **U.S. Playing Card** - is doing just that. And if this is a price war, U.S. is bigger and can hold its breath longer.

U.S. Playing Card executives did not respond to several interview requests.

The largest of the also-ran card makers is **Las Vegas**-based Paul-Son Gaming Corp., whose main business is casino seating and furniture, with most of its manufacturing based in San Luis, Mexico.

From the outside, Gemaco's Blue Springs plant looks deceptively small.

Inside the cavernous basement, 175 employees work three shifts, generating \$14 million in annual sales on production of 12 million decks.

Cincinnati newspapers have estimated that **U.S. Playing Card's** 500-plus work force churns out around 100 million decks a year, with annual sales estimated at \$120 million.

Both companies also manufacture specialty and collectors decks and promotional items such as pocket calendar cards.

Gemaco's sideline products represent about 30 percent of annual sales, Baranowski said. Casino cards are its bread and butter.

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Last year Gemaco introduced its "Alpha" series playing card made from custom German paper stock, which company officials say extends card life and won't jam as easily in automatic shuffling machines.

In addition to its new, Iowa-based table layout production line, Gemaco also has expanded into hardware. The company already sells a card shredding machine and soon will introduce its novel card sorter.

Casinos cannot simply throw used cards away. State regulators typically require permanent destruction or defacing of each card to ensure none pops out of the sleeve of a card cheat one day.


As a result, card recycling is a **Las Vegas** cottage industry. Baranowski said recyclers competed with one another for boxes of used cards that have been drilled through by the casinos or have had their corners clipped.

These entrepreneurs then hand-sort the cards back into complete decks for secondary sales as **Las Vegas** souvenirs. The casino gets a small cut or a percentage of the sorted decks for resale in their own shops.

Gemaco's newest machine, with electronic innards devised by Mechni Arts International Inc. of Shawnee, eliminates the middleman and promises to cut labor costs to boot. It flips through six or eight decks at a time "reading" and sorting the cards back into complete decks before drilling or clipping.

To reach Rick Alm, call (816) 234-4785 or send e-mail to rarm@kcstar.com.
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Las Vegas

MINI ROUGH GUIDE

Greg Ward

LAS VEGAS

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LAS VEGAS

THE MINI ROUGH GUIDE

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The publishers and authors have done their best to
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back, the *Nugget* simply swallowed up and built over Carson Street for the length of an entire block, replacing the road with the disappointing *Carson Street Café* coffeeshop.

A surprisingly inconspicuous case near the elevators for the North Tower shows off the hotel's collection of genuine golden nuggets. Pride of place goes to the Hand of Faith nugget, found in Australia in 1980 and said to be, at 61 pounds 11 ounces the largest "on public display" in the world. At current prices, it's worth \$252,672. Alongside are several sizable Alaskan lumps, including one worn smooth from being carried in the pocket of its owner as a good-luck charm for 25 years. In that time, a full two ounces were rubbed off.

BINION'S HORSESHOE

Map 4, F3. 128 E Fremont St. Hotel accommodation is reviewed on p.143; restaurants include the *Coffee Shop* (p.173).

If the *Golden Nugget* represents downtown at its most pretentious, then **Binion's Horseshoe** goes to the other extreme, resolutely promoting itself as the definitive downtown gambling hall and nothing more. That ethos dates back to its founder, Benny Binion, affectionately remembered as one of the great Las Vegas characters. Benny's record for violence was exceptional even by local standards: an itinerant Texan horse trader with at least two killings to his name, he ran the criminal underworld in Dallas during the 1940s, before a bloody gang feud persuaded him to relocate to Las Vegas. Acquiring two faltering Fremont Street casinos, he replaced them with the *Horseshoe*, which opened as downtown's first "carpet joint" in 1951.

Binion himself lost control of the casino when he was jailed for tax evasion in the 1950s – he took advantage of the interlude to learn to read and write – and never regained his gaming license. However, his family bought it

CHAPTER THREE

back in 1964, with Benny very much in charge behind the scenes. By the time he died, on Christmas Day 1989, the *Horseshoe* was the most profitable casino in Las Vegas. To Benny, the explanation was simple: "We got a little joint and a big bankroll, and all them others got a big joint and a little bankroll." The *Horseshoe* had in 1988 taken over the legendary *Mint* next door, simply bashing down the party wall, and in the process finally acquired a significant number of hotel rooms.

Such was Benny's single-minded focus on gambling that he refused to put on live music, saying "I'm not going to let some S.O.B. blow my bankroll out the end of a horn." His greatest coup was to establish the *Horseshoe* as the permanent home of the **World Series of Poker** in the late 1970s. At that time, few casinos offered poker, which was seen as having too much potential for fraud and other trouble. Since then, the high profile of the three-week tournament, which takes place in late April and May each year, has encouraged others to follow suit (though none as successfully), while cementing the *Horseshoe's* reputation as being, in their words, "where real gamblers hang their hats." It continues to operate the highest limits of any casino in town, and possibly the world; you can bet as much as you like, so long as you bet it as your very first stake.

Once you get past the *Horseshoe's* enormous neon sign, its dim, smoky and intensely serious interior holds little appeal to non-gamblers, though its downstairs coffeeshop ranks among the best bargains in town, with a long-running \$2 (sometimes \$3) steak deal. As you approach it, you also get the chance to pose for (free) photos in front of a display case containing a million dollars in banknotes. Incidentally, the Binion name hit the headlines again in 1999, following the alleged murder of Benny's son Ted by a former girlfriend.

The very narrow house "edge" on baccarat explains why the game is traditionally reserved for high-rollers; only the top echelon of casinos offer it, usually in roped-off enclaves where the minimum stake is at least \$100. These days, however, you may encounter the all-but-identical, if faster-paced, game of "**mini-baccarat**" being played out on the main casino floor, for lower minimum stakes.

BINGO

It's not easy to find the good old-fashioned game of **bingo** in Las Vegas, but what games there are tend to rank among the city's best deals. That's because, like a cheap buffet restaurant, bingo is seen by lesser casinos as a great way to lure in local customers. The game itself may not even run at a profit; the idea is that with intervals of up to two hours between sessions, bingo buffs will end up playing the slots and other games. Only the *Monte Carlo* and the *New Frontier* on the Strip, and *Binion's Horseshoe* downtown, bother to offer bingo at all; the best places to play elsewhere are *Sam's Town* and the *Gold Coast*.

BLACKJACK

Blackjack is the most popular table game in Las Vegas. The main reason is probably that many people are used to playing similar card games at home, whether that be "21" in North America or "pontoon" in Europe. In any case, it's easy to learn, and although you do have to play against the casino, the dealer is forbidden to exercise any skill or judgment, so there's no danger of being outwitted or cheated. Most tempting of all, not only are the odds relatively good to start with, but there is also a mathematically "correct" way to play blackjack, which may not guarantee success but can cut the house advantage even lower.

Although blackjack is played with a conventional pack of 52 cards, divided into four suits, the suits play no part in the

game. All that matters is the **point value** of each card. The numbered cards, from 2 to 10, are counted at their face value; jacks, queens, and kings are worth ten points; and players can choose to count aces as worth either one or eleven. Each player attempts to assemble a hand whose total value adds up as close as possible to, but not more than, **21**; that value must also be higher than, or equal to, the dealer's own hand. Thus a jack, a 3, and an 8 add up to 21, which is good; a 9, a 4, and a 6 add up to 19, which is pretty good; and a king and two 7s add up to 24, which is more than 21 and therefore bad. An ace and a 4 counts as either 5 (the "soft" total) or 15 (the "hard" total). Best of all is an ace and any card worth ten, which adds up to 21, and is known as either a "**natural**" or a "**blackjack**." (In early versions of blackjack, an ace plus a black jack was considered especially good — hence the name — but now a blackjack is any two-card combination that totals 21.)

In the most usual form of blackjack, each round begins with each player placing the chips they wish to stake in their own designated betting area. All are then dealt two cards, face down, while the dealer receives one card face down, and one face up. Look at your cards by raising the edge, but don't pick them up. Starting with the player on the dealer's left, each player then plays his or her own hand in its entirety. On your turn, you repeatedly choose whether to "**hit**," and be dealt another card face up — which you signal by either scratching your fingers toward you on the table or just saying "hit." When you don't want to hit any more, which may well be immediately, signal that you've decided to "**stand**" by pushing your cards, unexposed, beneath your stake money. If, after you "hit," your total exceeds 21, you're "**bust**," and you must say so by turning all your cards face up; the dealer will respond by taking your cards and your stake.

Only once all the players have finished does the dealer turn both his or her cards face up and play out his or her own

hand. The dealer, however, has no discretion as to how to proceed – the instructions are written on the table for all to see. The dealer must hit if the total is 16 or lower, and stand as soon it reaches 17 or higher, so he or she has to keep on hitting even when his total of 16 would in theory beat all the players. When the dealer's final total is settled, all the players' hands are revealed and the bets are paid off; you'll either get your original stake back, plus the same amount again, if you've beaten the dealer; lose your stake if you've been beaten; or simply keep it if you've tied. If the dealer has a "natural," that beats any total of 21 that uses three or more cards. If on the other hand you're dealt a "natural," you can immediately turn them over to announce this fact. The dealer will then check his or her cards for a natural; if the dealer also has one, it's a tie (and the hand is over for everyone else); otherwise you're paid off at three-to-two odds.

There are three further possibilities. If you're dealt a "pair" – two 3s, two aces, whatever – you can "split" them and play two separate hands, doubling your original stake so that you have the same bet on each. You can also "double down," which means that if your original two cards are such that being dealt one, and only one, more card is likely to give you a winning total, you can double your stake and take that chance. Both those strategies are sound in some circumstances (see opposite for examples); the third, however, an option called "insurance" which is too complicated to be worth explaining here, is said by experts never to be a good bet.

The casinos' built-in advantage at blackjack stems from the fact that you have to play your own hand before the dealer plays, and you forfeit your stake for going "bust" whether or not the dealer subsequently also goes bust. However, the lure of the game for serious gamblers stems from the work of computer expert Edward Thorp, whose 1962 book *Beat The Dealer* proved that by memorizing the cards as they are dealt, skilled players can consistently beat the house. At first, Las

Vegas casinos panicked, banning all "card counters"; then they made things harder, by using several packs of cards at once, and shuffling at random intervals. It soon transpired that in any case hardly anyone can count cards accurately in the noisy, stressful conditions of a modern casino, and most gamblers went on losing at the same rate as ever.

Computer analysis has also shown that if you compare your own cards with the dealer's face-up card, there's a "correct" response to every permutation. Charts displaying this "basic strategy," which reduces the house advantage to a mere one percent, are widely available in specialist gambling books; some casinos even distribute them. In essence, if your total is between 12 and 16, you should stand if the dealer's face-up card is between 2 and 6 (with a few exceptions, like if you have 12 and the dealer is showing a 2), and hit if it isn't; if your total is 17, stand (unless you're dealt an ace and a 6); and always stand if your total is 18 or over. On top of that, if you're total is 10 or 11, and the dealer has from 2 to 9, you should "double down"; while if you're dealt a pair of 8s, or a pair of aces, you should "split."

The usual minimum stake for blackjack games on the Strip is \$5, although it tends to rise in the evening at the larger casinos to \$25. The *Sahara*, however, guarantees \$1 tables 24 hours per day. Many casinos also offer gimmicky blackjack variations such as "double exposure," in which the dealer's hand is dealt face up, and **Spanish 21**, in which all the 10s are removed from the pack. These feature a host of other minor rule changes, detailed either on the table itself or on leaflets. The odds aren't necessarily any better or worse than usual, but the optimum strategy will differ.

If you want to play single- or double-deck blackjack for low minimum stakes you may be better off heading downtown rather than to the Strip.

GAMBLING

their choice is then compared with the twenty drawn by the casino. Even if you select twenty numbers, the probability of five being correct is less than one in 300; of picking eight, is one in 250,000; and of picking ten is one in ten million. Compare those odds with the returns actually paid by the casinos, and you'll see why they're on to such a good deal.

POKER

In its traditional form, **poker** is unique among Las Vegas card games in that gamblers play against each other, not the house. The casinos simply provide a room and a dealer, in return either for a percentage on every hand, which varies from one to ten percent, or, less usually, charging by the hour. Playing poker against a bunch of total strangers is undeniably exciting, but it's not a risk to take lightly. It might be melodramatic to imagine that your opponents are cheats or crooks, but they may well be professionals, and it's downright crazy to assume they're worse at the game than you are. The two most widely played variations, both of which offer scope for endless rounds of betting, are **Seven Card Stud**, in which each player is dealt two cards face down, four more face up, and then a final one face down, and **Texas Hold 'Em**, in which each player gets two face-down cards, and then five communal cards are dealt face up on the table. The object in both games is to make the highest hand possible using five of the seven cards, though often how you bet is more crucial than the cards on which you're betting.

Casinos generally see traditional poker as a service for guests who will also gamble on other games, though several have begun to stage poker tournaments, along the lines of the wildly successful **World Series of Poker** held in late April each year at *Binion's Horseshoe* downtown (see p.84 for more information).

In addition, most casinos offer what are essentially hybrids of poker and blackjack. These new games, played

on blackjack-like tables, are designed to pit gamblers directly against the house – and thus seem less intimidating – while also maximizing the house advantage. The usual minimum bet on the Strip is \$5, though you might find a \$3 table.

In **Caribbean Stud Poker**, originally developed for cruise ships, each player makes an ante bet, and is dealt five cards face down, while the dealer gets four cards face down and one face up. You can now either “fold” – surrender both hand and bet – or “call,” by adding another bet that’s double your original ante. Each hand is compared individually with the dealer’s. If you beat the dealer, you win your ante bet at even odds, while your call bet might win a bonus of as much as a hundred to one, depending on how high a hand you have. There’s an outrageous twist, however; if the dealer has an especially bad hand, of anything less than an ace and a king, it’s said not to “qualify,” and call bets are returned rather than paid off. Betting an additional \$1 per hand enters you for a progressive jackpot, payable on royal flushes, that can reach over \$100,000.

Let It Ride is an unorthodox variation in which you make three separate but equal bets on the three cards you’re dealt, but can then withdraw one bet at a time as two further communal cards are revealed. You’re not competing against anyone else here, not even the dealer; bets are paid off according to a chart that shows each winning hand and the (severely under-valued) odds against it.

Pai Gow Poker – as distinct from the Chinese domino game Pai Gow, which you may also encounter – is played with an ordinary pack of cards plus a single joker, which can count as either an ace or a “wild” card to complete a flush or straight. Each player, including the dealer, receives seven cards and has to divide them into one five-card hand and one two-card hand. Although the two-card hand must be worth less than the five-card one, *both* have to defeat *both*

the dealer’s hands for you to win. If only one beats the dealer, it’s a “push,” and bets are returned. The house levies a five percent commission on winning bets.

For an account of video poker, see p.222.

ROULETTE

Roulette, a game of pure chance, revolves around guessing which of the numbered compartments of a rotating wheel will be the eventual resting place of a ball released by the dealer. Players use the adjoining baize table to bet not only on the precise number, but also on whether it is odd or even, or “black” or “red,” or falls within various specified ranges.

The oldest of the regular casino games, roulette was introduced to the casinos of Paris in 1765 with official police blessing, on the grounds that it was impossible to cheat. That doesn’t mean, however, that your chances of winning are especially good.

All roulette wheels hold the numbers 1 to 36, of which half are colored red and half black, plus a green 0; almost all the wheels in Las Vegas also feature a green 00. On this “double-zero” layout, the wheel has 38 compartments, so gamblers have a 1 in 38 chance of choosing the right number (it’s possible to bet on 0 or 00, although neither counts as red or black, or odd or even). When there’s only one zero, the true odds are 1 in 37. However, the odds for successful bets are always the same, set as if there were no zeroes at all. A correct number is paid off at 35 to 1, guessing the correct pair of numbers pays 17 to 1, the correct block of three pays 11 to 1, and so on.

Roulette means “little wheel” in French.

SHOES

Jimmy Choo

Map 2, C1. Grand Canal Shoppes, *The Venetian*, 3355 Las Vegas Blvd S ☎733-1802.

Sun-Thurs 10am-11pm, Fri & Sat 10am-midnight.

The last word in elegant female footwear, brought to you by the aptly named Malaysian designer who was a personal favorite of Princess Diana.

Just For Feet

Map 2, B2. Forum Shops, *Caesars Palace*, 3500 Las Vegas Blvd S ☎791-3482.

Mon-Thurs & Sun 10am-11pm, Fri & Sat 10am-midnight.

What's said to be the world's largest athletic shoe store, with four thousand big-name styles, faces the living statues just inside the Forum as you come in off the Strip. The prices generally aren't bad, but you can get a reduction of twenty percent or more merely for singing one song and gyrating like a loon on top of the counter during one of their regular karaoke sessions.

Nike Town

Map 2, B2. Forum Shops, *Caesars Palace*, 3500 Las Vegas Blvd S ☎650-8888.

Mon-Thurs & Sun 10am-11pm, Fri & Sat 10am-midnight.

This gleaming, high-tech, two-story superstore, behind Atlantis at the far end of the Forum, is as much museum as shoe store, but if there's even a hint of foot fetishism in your make up you won't be able to resist its adoration of the sports shoe. Each section is devoted to a specific sport.

GIFTS AND SOUVENIRS

Ancient Creations

Map 2, C1. Grand Canal Shoppes, *The Venetian*, 3355 Las Vegas Blvd S ☎414-3701.

Sun-Thurs 10am-11pm, Fri & Sat 10am-midnight.

An antiques store with a fascinating difference; these are real antiques, dating back in some cases thousands of years. The exact stock varies of course, but can include Roman water jars priced at \$18,500, Greek statuettes for \$2400, or a 1611 edition of the King James Bible at \$99,000. Individual coins from the Classical world can cost as little as \$25. Ancient Creations has another branch in the Appian Way Shops in *Caesars Palace*.

Bonanza Gift Shop

Map 3, F4. 2460 Las Vegas Blvd S ☎385-7359.

Daily 8am-midnight.

Located at a busy intersection, across from the *Sahara* and a few blocks south of the *Stratosphere*, the self-proclaimed "World's Largest Gift Store" is not all that big really, but it's the best single outlet for all those tacky souvenirs you'd hope to find in Las Vegas. Beyond the predictable array of used playing cards from all the casinos (costing \$1), gaming boards, fuzzy dice, whoopee cushions, fart candy, postcards, and male and female nudie ballpoint pens, you'll find a more surreal world of Las Vegas snowstorms, Elvis clocks, and inflatable aliens, plus every permutation thereof—like alien Elvises trapped in snowstorms.

Gamblers General Store

Map 4, D5. 800 S Main St ☎382-9903 or 1-800/322-2447.

Daily 9am-5pm.

For a truly authentic Las Vegas souvenir, you can't do better than the Gamblers General Store a few blocks south of downtown. As well as selling old slot machines for \$999—be

sure to check the list of states where it's illegal to possess one even in your own home – and full-sized craps table for \$4000, they have felt mats with roulette, blackjack, and craps layouts for \$40, and packs of cards from all the casinos for 99¢. There's also a large library of books on gambling, detailing techniques for blackjack, craps, horses, and even slots, though paying \$20 for a photocopied pamphlet explaining why you'll never win has to be a waste of money even by Las Vegas standards.

BOOKS

Albion Book Company

Map 1, E5. 2466 E Desert Inn Rd  792-9554.

Daily 10am–6pm.

The valley's best stock of secondhand books, including large sections on Las Vegas and the West, plus a big collection of used audio books at bargain prices – handy if you're setting off on a road trip.

Barnes & Noble

Map 1, B3. 2191 N Rainbow Blvd  631-2216.

Daily 9am–11pm.

This chain outlet is several miles west of downtown, just beyond the point where US-95 veers north, but has a copious selection of new books on every subject, plus a roomy caf  that's ideal for a light lunch. Also, and equally inconveniently, at 567 Stephanie St in Henderson.

Bookstar

Map 1, D5. 3910 S Maryland Pkwy  732-7882.

Daily 9am–11pm.

The largest bookstore serving the University District, a couple of miles east of the Strip.

SHOPPING

Borders

Map 1, C4. 2323 S Decatur Blvd  258-0999.

Mon–Sat 9am–11pm, Sun 9am–9pm.

An excellent range of new books and magazines, a couple of miles west of the Strip along Sahara Ave. Other branches at 2190 N Rainbow Blvd (across from Barnes & Noble) and 1445 W Sunset Rd in Henderson (near Sunset Station).

MUSIC

Tower Records at WOW

Map 1, C4. 4580 W Sahara Ave  364-2500.

Daily 10am–midnight.

Two miles west of the Strip and a couple of blocks east of Borders, Tower boasts a good collection of new CDs – with a better chance of finding a bargain than at Virgin – and forms part of a larger complex that also sells videos and musical equipment.

Virgin Megastore

Map 2, B2. Forum Shops, Caesars Palace, 3500 Las Vegas Blvd S  696-7100.

Mon–Thurs & Sun 10am–11pm, Fri & Sat 10am–midnight.

One of the Forum's few multistory stores, the only music store on the Strip stocks the broadest selection of new CDs in town, and also has a small but very hip book section.

ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT AND CAMERAS

The Good Guys

Map 1, C4. 4580 W Sahara Ave at Decatur  364-2500.

Daily 9am–midnight.

The best source in Las Vegas for electronic good of all kinds,

CONTEXTS

Hunter S Thompson, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* (Random House, US; Paladin, UK). Classic account of the drug-propelled "gonzo" journalist's lost weekend in early 1970s Las Vegas. What's really striking is how much further over the top the place has gone since then.

Mike Tronnes (ed), *Literary Las Vegas* (Henry Holt, US; Mainstream Publishing, UK). Superb collection of book extracts and magazine articles, which provides the full flavor of the changing city over the last fifty years.

Top twelve Las Vegas movies

Las Vegas has become, with its glittering new signs and casinos, an increasingly popular setting for films; below are a dozen that use the city to best – or most ludicrous – advantage. Not included are films such as *Rain Man* (1988) and *Swingers* (1996), in which a few key scenes take place amid all the neon glory.

<i>Bugsy</i> (1991)	<i>The Las Vegas Story</i> (1952)
<i>Casino</i> (1995)	<i>Leaving Las Vegas</i> (1995)
<i>Diamonds Are Forever</i> (1960)	<i>Mars Attacks</i> (1996)
<i>Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas</i> (1997)	<i>Oceans 11</i> (1960)
<i>Honeymoon In Vegas</i> (1993)	<i>Showgirls</i> (1995)
<i>Indecent Proposal</i> (1993)	<i>Viva Las Vegas</i> (1964)

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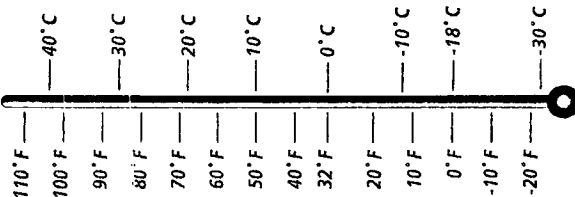


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METRIC CONVERSIONS

TEMPERATURE



To convert F to C:
subtract 32 and
multiply by $\frac{5}{9}$ (0.555)

To convert C to F:
multiply by 1.8
and add 32
 $32^\circ\text{F} = 0^\circ\text{C}$

LIQUID VOLUME

To convert	multiply by
U.S. gallons to liters	3.79
Liters to U.S. gallons	0.26
U.S. gallons to imperial gallons	0.83
Imperial gallons to U.S. gallons	1.20
Imperial gallons to liters	4.55
Liters to imperial gallons	0.22
1 liter = 0.26 U.S. gallon	
1 U.S. gallon = 3.8 liters	



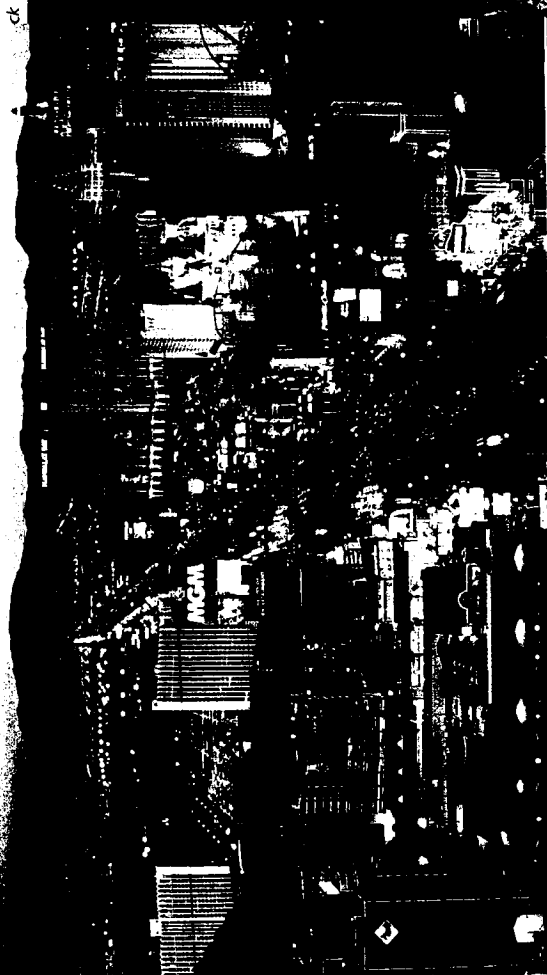
DISTANCE

To convert	multiply by
inches to centimeters	2.54
centimeters to inches	0.39
feet to meters	0.30
meters to feet	3.28
yards to meters	0.91
meters to yards	1.09
miles to kilometers	1.61
kilometers to miles	0.62
1 ft = 0.30 m	
1 m = 3.3 ft	
1 mile = 1.6 km	
1 km = 0.62 mile	



WEIGHT

To convert	multiply by
Ounces to grams	28.35
Grams to ounces	0.035
Pounds to kilograms	0.45
Kilograms to pounds	2.20
1 ounce = 28 grams	
1 pound = 0.45555 kilogram	
1 gram = 0.04 ounce	
1 kilogram = 2.2 pounds	

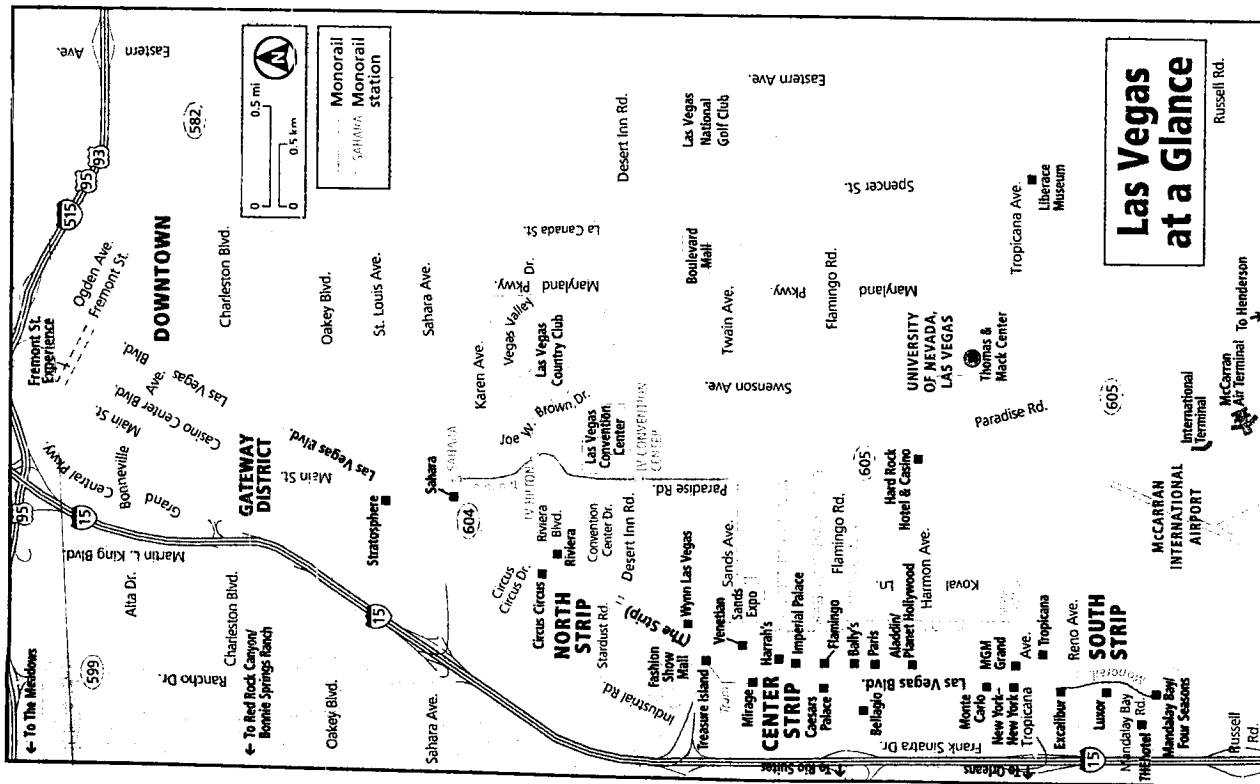


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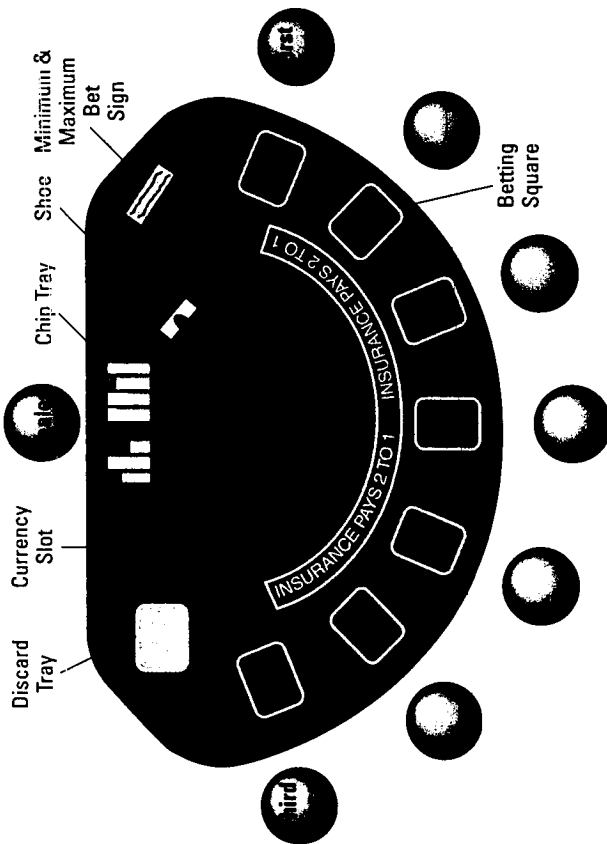


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Blackjack



Basic Strategy

The Dealer Is Showing:

2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Ace
4-11	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H
12	H	H	S	S	S	S	S	S	H
13	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	H
14	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	H
15	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	H
16	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	H

S = Stand **H = Hit**

Poker Hands

A ♠ ACE
K ♠ KING
Q ♠ QUEEN
J ♠ JACK
10 ♠ TEN

3 ♣ THREE
4 ♣ FOUR
5 ♣ FIVE
6 ♣ SIX
7 ♣ SEVEN

8 ♥ EIGHT
8 ♣ EIGHT
8 ♦ EIGHT
8 ♠ EIGHT
A ♥ ACE

K ♠ KING
K ♣ KING
3 ♠ THREE
3 ♣ THREE
3 ♦ THREE
3 ♠ THREE

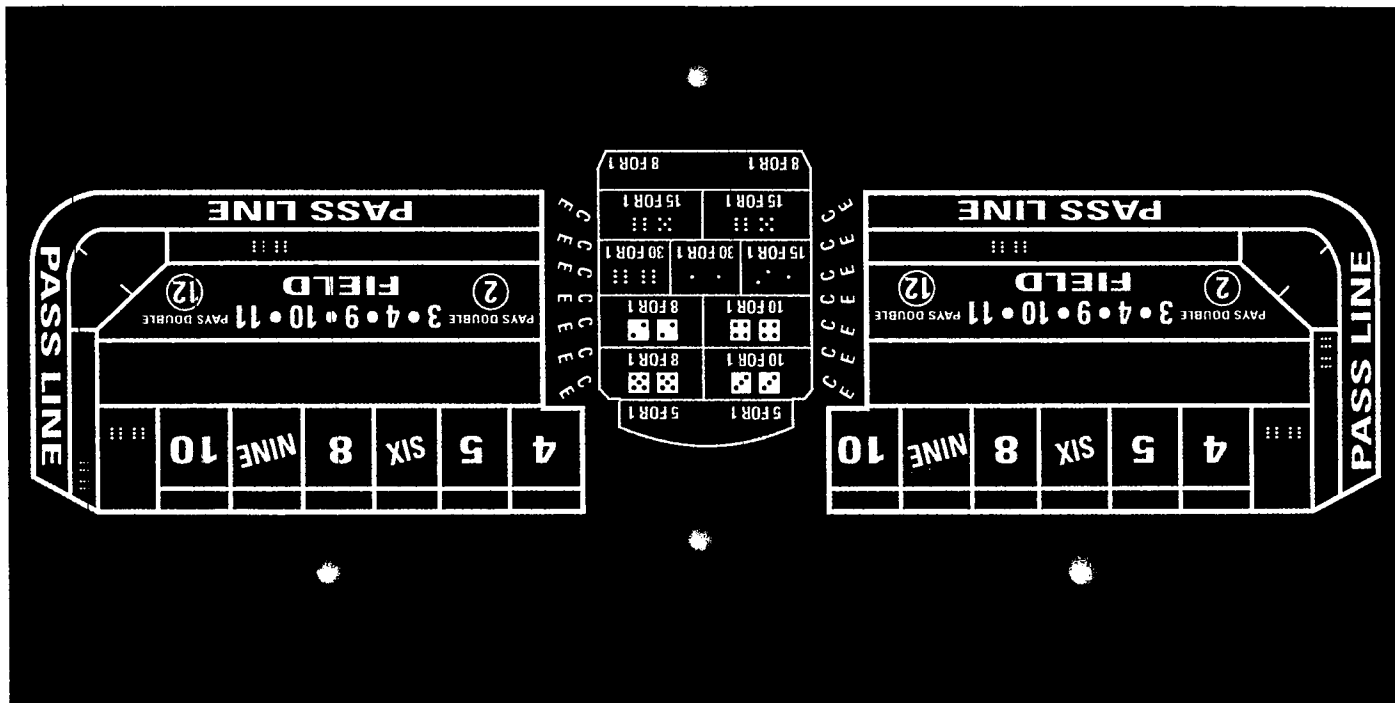
4 ♠ FOUR
6 ♠ SIX
7 ♠ SEVEN
J ♠ JACK
A ♠ ACE

6 ♣ SIX
7 ♦ SEVEN
8 ♠ EIGHT
9 ♥ NINE
10 ♦ TEN

Q ♠ QUEEN
Q ♣ QUEEN
Q ♥ QUEEN
5 ♦ FIVE
7 ♣ SEVEN

5 ♦ FIVE
5 ♣ FIVE
3 ♥ THREE
3 ♠ THREE
K ♠ KING

A ♦ ACE
A ♣ ACE
4 ♣ FOUR
9 ♠ NINE
2 ♣ TWO



Frommer's®

Las Vegas

2006

by Mary Herczog

Here's what the critic says about Frommer's:

"Amazingly easy to use. Very portable, very complete."

—Booklist

"Detailed, accurate, and easy-to-read information for all price ranges."

—Glamour Magazine

"Hotel information is close to encyclopedic."

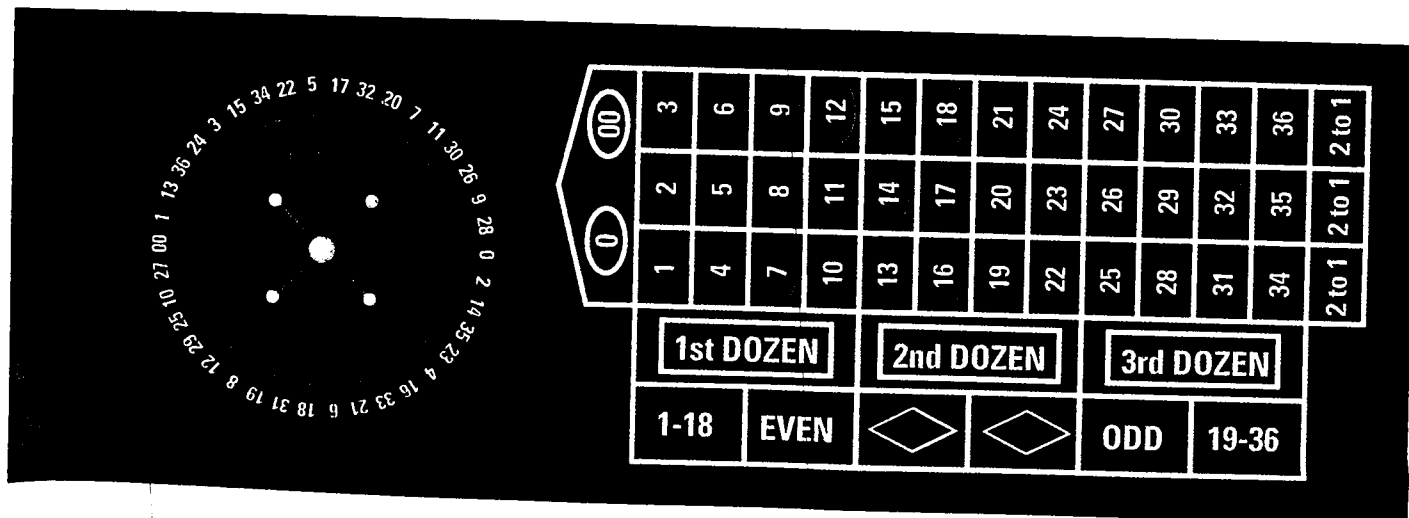
—Des Moines Sunday Register

"Frommer's Guides have a way of giving you a real feel for a place."

—Knight Ridder Newspapers



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About the Author

Mary Herzog lives in Los Angeles and works in the film industry. She is the author of *Frommer's New Orleans, California For Dummies*, *Frommer's Portable Las Vegas for Non-Gamblers*, and *Las Vegas For Dummies*, and has contributed to *Frommer's Los Angeles*. She still isn't sure when to hit and when to hold in blackjack.

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An Invitation to the Reader

In researching this book, we discovered many wonderful places—hotels, restaurants, shops, and more. We're sure you'll find others. Please tell us about them, so we can share the information with your fellow travelers in upcoming editions. If you were disappointed with a recommendation, we'd love to know that, too. Please write to:

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An Additional Note

Please be advised that travel information is subject to change at any time—and this is especially true of prices. We therefore suggest that you write or call ahead for confirmation when making your travel plans. The authors, editors, and publisher cannot be held responsible for the experiences of readers while traveling. Your safety is important to us, however, so we encourage you to stay alert and be aware of your surroundings. Keep a close eye on cameras, purses, and wallets, all favorite targets of thieves and pickpockets.

Other Great Guides for Your Trip:

Frommer's Portable Las Vegas
Frommer's Portable Las Vegas for Non-Gamblers
Las Vegas For Dummies
The Unofficial Guide to Las Vegas
Frommer's Irreverent Guide to Las Vegas
Frommer's Arizona

Impressions

Stilled forever is the click of the roulette wheel, the rattle of dice, and the swish of cards.

—Shortsighted editorial in the *Nevada State Journal* after gambling was outlawed in 1910

About Casino Gambling

What? You didn't come to Las Vegas for the Liberace Museum? We are shocked. Shocked.

Yes, there are gambling opportunities in Vegas. We've noticed this. You will too. The tip-off will be the slot machines in the airport as soon as you step off the plane. Or the slot machines in the convenience stores as soon as you drive across the state line. Let's not kid ourselves; gambling is what Vegas is about. The bright lights, the shows, the showgirls, the food—it's all there just to lure you in and make you open your wallet. (The free drinks certainly help ease the latter as well.)

You can disappoint them if you want, but what would be the point? *This is Las Vegas.* You don't have to be a high roller. You would not believe how much fun you can have with a nickel slot machine. You won't get rich, but neither will most of those guys playing the \$5 slots, either.

Of course, that's not going to stop anyone from trying. Almost everyone plays in Vegas with the hopes of winning The Big One. That only a few ever do win doesn't stop them from trying again and again. That's how the casinos make their money, by the way.

It's not that the odds are stacked so incredibly high in their favor—though the odds *are* in their favor, and don't ever think otherwise. Rather, it's that if there is one constant in this world, it's human greed. Look around in any casino, and you'll see countless souls who, having doubled their winnings, are now trying to quadruple them, and are losing it all and then trying to recoup their initial bankroll and losing

still more in the process. See that chandelier up there? Enjoy it—you paid for it.

Which is not meant to dissuade you from gambling. Just be sure to look at it as recreation and entertainment, *not* as an investment or moneymaking opportunity. Spend only as much as you can afford to lose and not a penny more. It doesn't matter if that's \$10 or \$100,000. You can have just as good a time with either. (Though if you can afford to lose \$100,000, we would like to meet you.)

Remember also that there is no system that's sure to help you win. We all have our own systems and our own ideas. Reading books and listening to others at the tables will help you pick up some tips, but if there were a surefire way to win, the casinos would have taken care of it (and we will leave you to imagine just what that might entail). Try to have the courage to walk away when your bankroll is up, not down. Remember, your children's college fund is just that, and not a gambling-budget supplement.

The first part of this chapter is a contribution from James Randi, a master magician, who looks at the four major fallacies people bring with them to the gaming tables in Las Vegas: it's fascinating, and we thank him for this contribution.

The second part tells you the basics of betting. Knowing how to play the games not only improves your odds but also makes playing more enjoyable. In addition to the instructions below, you'll find dozens of books on how to gamble at all casino hotel gift shops, and many casinos offer free gaming lessons on the premises.

1 The Four Most Pervasive Myths About Gambling

by James Randi

James Randi is a world-class magician (the Amazing Randi), now involved in examining supernatural, paranormal, and occult claims. He is the author of 11 books on these subjects and is the president of the James Randi Educational Foundation in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The JREF offers a prize of \$1.1 million to any person who can produce a demonstration of any paranormal activity. His website is www.randi.org, where details of the offer can be found.

Most of us know little, if anything, about statistics. It's a never-never land we can live without, something for those guys in white coats and thick glasses to mumble over. And because we don't bother to learn the basics of this rather interesting field of study, we sometimes find ourselves unable to deal with the realities that the gambling process produces.

I often present my audiences with a puzzle. Suppose that a mathematician, a gambler, and a magician are walking together on Broadway and come upon a small cluster of people who are observing a chap standing at a small table set up on the sidewalk. They are told that this fellow has just tossed a quarter into the air and allowed it to fall onto the table, nine times. And that has produced nine "tails" in a row. Now the crowd is being asked to bet on what the next toss of the coin will bring. The question: How will each of these three observers place their bets?

The mathematician will reason that each toss of the coin is independent of the last toss, so the chances are still exactly 50/50 for heads or tails. He'll say that either bet is okay and that it doesn't make any difference which decision is made.

The gambler will go one of two ways; either he'll reason that there's a "run" taking place here—and that a bet on another tail will be the better choice—or he'll opine that it's time for the head to come up, and he'll put his wager on that likelihood.

The magician? He has the best chance of winning because he knows that there is only 1 chance in 512 that a coin will come up tails nine times in a row—*unless there's something wrong with that coin!* He'll bet tails and he'll win!

The reasoning of the mathematician is quite correct, that of the gambler is quite wrong (in either one of his scenarios), but just as long as that isn't a double-tailed coin.

The point of view taken by the magician is highly specialized, but human nature being what it is, that view is probably the correct one.

In professional gambling centers such as Las Vegas, great care is taken to ensure that there are no two-tailed quarters or other purposeful anomalies that enable cheating to take place. The casinos make their percentages on the built-in mathematical advantage, which is clearly stated and available to any who ask, and though that is a very tiny "edge," it's enough to pay for the razzle-dazzle that lures in the customers. It's volatility that supports the business. The scrutiny that is applied to each and every procedure in Vegas is evident everywhere.

So, **Fallacy Number One** is: Cheating of some sort is necessary for an operation to prosper. It isn't.

Fallacy Number Two: Some people just have "hunches" and "visions" that enable them to win at the slots and tables. Sorry folks, it just ain't so. The science of psychology, which has studied such claims for many decades now, has never come up with evidence that any form of clairvoyance ("clear-seeing," the supposed ability to know hidden data, such as the next card to come up in a deal or the next face on the dice) or telepathy ("mind reading") actually exists. It's remarkably easy for us to imagine that we have a hot streak going, or that the cards are falling our way, but the inextinguishable laws of chance prevail and always will.

Fallacy Number Three: There are folks who can give us systems for winning. Now, judicious bet placing is possible, and there are mathematical methods of minimizing losses, it's true. But the investment and base capital needed to follow through with these methods makes them a rather poor investment. The return percentage can be earned much more easily by almost any other form of endeavor, at less risk and less expenditure of boring hours following complicated charts and equations. The best observation we can make on the "systems" is: Why would the inventors of the "systems" sell something that they themselves could use to get rich, which is what they say you can do with it? Think about that!

Of course, the simplest of all the systems is bet doubling. It sounds great in theory, but an hour spent tossing coins in your hotel room, or at the gaming tables, will convince you that theory and practice are quite different matters. Bet doubling, as applied to heads or tails (on a fair coin!), consists of placing a unit bet on the first coin toss, then pocketing the proceeds if you win, but doubling your bet on the next toss if you lose. If you get a lose, lose, win sequence, that means you will have lost three units (one plus two) and won four. You're up one unit. You start again. If you get a lose, lose, win sequence, you've put out 15 units and brought in 16. Again, you're up only one unit. And no matter how long your sequences go, you'll always be up only one unit at the end of a sequence. It requires you to make that "unit" somewhat sizeable if you want to have any significant winnings at all, and that may mean going bankrupt by simply running out of capital before a sequence ends—and if you hang on, you'll have been able to end up only one unit ahead, in any case. Not a good investment at all.

Fallacy Number Four: Studying the results of the roulette wheels will provide the bettor with useful data. We're peculiar animals, in that we constantly search for meaning in all sets of observations. That's how subjects of Rorschach tests find weird faces, figures, and creatures in inkblots that are actually random patterns with single symmetry. Similarly, any sets of roulette results are, essentially, random numbers; there are no patterns to be found there that can give indications of probable future spins of the

wheels. Bearing in mind that those wheels are carefully monitored to detect any biases or defects, we should conclude that finding clues in past performances is futile.

I recall that when I worked in Wiesbaden, Germany, just after World War II, I stuck around late one night after closing at the "Spielbank" and watched as an elderly gentleman removed all the rotors of the 12 wheels they had in operation, wrote out the numbers 1 to 12 on separate scraps of paper, and reassembled the wheels according to the random order in which he drew each slip of paper from a bowl. He was ensuring that any inconsistencies in the wheels would be essentially nullified. Yet, as he told me, the front desk at the casino continued to sell booklets setting out the results of each of the wheels because patrons insisted on having them and persisted in believing that there just had to be a pattern there, if only it could be found.

We're only human. We can't escape certain defects in our thinking mechanism, but we can resist reacting to them. When we see Penn & Teller, Ayala, Siegfried & Roy, or Lance Burton doing their wonders, we smile smugly and assure ourselves that those miracles are only illusions. But if we haven't solved those illusions, and we haven't, how can we assume that we aren't being fooled by our own self-created delusions? Let's get a grip on reality and enjoy Las Vegas for what it really is: a grand illusion, a fairyland, a let's-pretend project, but not one in which the laws of nature are suspended or can be ignored. Enjoy!

2 The Games

As you walk through the labyrinthine twists and turns of a casino floor, your attention will likely be dragged to the various games and, your interest piqued, your fingers may begin to twitch in anticipation of hitting it big. Before you put your money on the line, it's imperative to know the rules of the game you want to play. Most casinos offer free gambling lessons at scheduled times on weekdays. This provides a risk-free environment for you to learn the games that tickle your fancy. Some casinos follow their lessons with low-stakes game play, enabling you to put your newfound knowledge to the test at small risk. During those instructional sessions, and even when playing on your own, dealers in most casinos will be more than happy to answer any questions you might have. Remember, the casino doesn't need to trick you into losing your money . . . the odds are already in their favor across the board; that's why it's called gambling. Another rule of thumb: Take a few minutes to watch a game being played in order to familiarize yourself with the motions and lingo. Then go back and reread this section—things will make a lot more sense at that point. Good luck!

BACCARAT

The ancient game of baccarat, or *chemin de fer*, is played with eight decks of cards. Firm rules apply, and there is no skill involved other than deciding whether to bet on the bank or the player. No, really—that's all you have to do. The dealer does all the other work. You can essentially stop reading here. Oh, all right, carry on.

Any beginner can play, but check the betting minimum before you sit down, as this tends to be a high-stakes game. The cards are shuffled by the croupier and then placed in a box called the "shoe." Players may wager on "bank" or "player" at any time. Two cards are dealt from the shoe and given to the player who has the largest wager against the bank, and two cards are dealt to the croupier, acting as banker. If the rules call for a third card, the player or banker, or both, must take the third card. In the event of a tie, the hand is dealt over. **Note:** The guidelines that determine whether a third card

Tips Size Counts . . . Sort Of

For those who desire a more informal environment in which to play baccarat, casinos offer minibaccarat, played on a normal-size table no larger than a blackjack table. There is no substantive difference between baccarat and its little brother. It's simply a matter of size and speed—the size of your bankroll and the speed with which you may build it (or lose it). Table stakes in minibaccarat tend to be lower, and the hands proceed at a much faster pace.

must be drawn (by the player or banker) are provided at the baccarat table upon request.

The object of the game is to come as close as possible to the number 9. To score the hands, the cards of each hand are totaled and the *last digit* is used. All cards have face value. For example: 10 plus 5 equals 15 (score is 5); 10 plus 4 plus 9 equals 23 (score is 3); 4 plus 3 plus 3 equals 10 (score is 0); and 4 plus 3 plus 2 equals 9 (score is 9). The closest hand to 9 wins.

Each player has a chance to deal the cards. The shoe passes to the player on the right each time the bank loses. If the player wishes, he or she may pass the shoe at any time.

Note: When you bet on the bank and the bank wins, you are charged a 5% commission. This must be paid at the start of a new game or when you leave the table.

BIG SIX

Big Six provides pleasant recreation and involves no study or effort. The wheel has 56 positions on it, 54 of them marked by bills from \$1 to \$20. The other two spots are jokers, and each pays 40 to 1 if the wheel stops in that position. All other stops pay at face value. Those marked with \$20 bills pay 20 to 1, the \$5 bills pay 5 to 1, and so forth. The idea behind the game is to predict (or just blindly guess) what spot the wheel will stop at and place a bet accordingly.

BLACKJACK

The dealer starts the game by dealing each player two cards. In some casinos, they're dealt to the player face up, in others face down, but the dealer always gets one card up and one card down. Everybody plays against the dealer. The object is to get a total that is higher than that of the dealer without exceeding 21. All face cards count as 10; all other number cards, except aces, are counted at their face value. An ace may be counted as 1 or 11, whichever you choose it to be.

Starting at his or her left, the dealer gives additional cards to the players who wish to draw (be "hit") or none to a player who wishes to "stand" or "hold." If your count is nearer to 21 than the dealer's, you win. If it's under the dealer's, you lose. Ties are a push and nobody wins. After all the players are satisfied with their counts, the dealer exposes his or her face-down card. If his or her two cards total 16 or less, the dealer must "hit" (draw an additional card) until reaching 17 or over. If the dealer's total exceeds 21, he or she must pay all the players whose hands have not gone "bust." It is important to note here that the blackjack dealer has no choice as to whether he or she should stay or draw. A dealer's decisions are predetermined and known to all the players at the table.

If you're a novice or just rusty, do yourself a favor and buy one of the small laminated cards available in shops all over town that illustrate proper play for every possible hand

in blackjack. Even longtime players have been known to pull them out every now and then, and they can save you from making costly errors.

HOW TO PLAY

Here are eight "rules" for blackjack:

1. Place the number of chips that you want to bet on the betting space on your table.
2. Look at the first two cards the dealer starts you with. If you wish to "stand," then wave your hand over your cards, palm down (watch your fellow players), indicating that you don't wish any additional cards. If you elect to draw an additional card, you tell the dealer to "hit" you by tapping the table with a finger (watch your fellow players).
3. If your count goes over 21, you are "bust" and lose, even if the dealer also goes "bust" afterward.
4. If you make 21 in your first two cards (any picture card or 10 with an ace), you've got blackjack. You will be paid $1\frac{1}{2}$ times your bet, provided the dealer does not have blackjack, too, in which case it's a push and nobody wins.
5. If you find a "pair" in your first two cards (say, two 8s or two aces), you may "split" the pair into two hands and treat each card as the first card dealt in two separate hands. You will need to place an additional bet, equal to your original bet, on the table. The dealer will then deal you a new *second* card to the first split card and play commences as described above. This will be done for the second split card as well. **Note:** When you split aces, you will receive only one additional card per ace and must "stand."
6. After seeing your two starting cards, you have the option to "double down." You place an amount equal to your original bet on the table and you receive only one more card. Doubling down is a strategy to capitalize on a potentially strong hand against the dealer's weaker hand. **Tip:** You may double down for less than your original bet, but never for more.
7. Anytime the dealer deals himself or herself an ace for the "up" card, you may insure your hand against the possibility that the hole card is a 10 or face card, which would give him or her an automatic blackjack. To insure, you place an amount up to one-half of your bet on the "insurance" line. If the dealer does have a blackjack, you get paid 2 to 1 on the insurance money while losing your original bet: You break even. If the dealer does not have a blackjack, he or she takes your insurance money and play continues in the normal fashion.
8. **Remember:** The dealer must stand on 17 or more and must hit a hand of 16 or less.

Tips Look, but Don't Touch!

1. Never touch your cards (or anyone else's), unless it's specifically stated at the table that you may. While you'll receive only a verbal slap on the wrist if you violate this rule, you really don't want to get one.
2. Players must use hand signals to indicate their wishes to the dealer. All verbal directions by players will be politely ignored by the dealer, who will remind players to use hand signals. The reason for this is the "Eye in the Sky," the casino's security system, which focuses an "eye" on every table and must record players' decisions to avoid accusations of misconduct or collusion.

PROFESSIONAL TIPS

Advice of the experts in playing blackjack is as follows:

1. *Do not* ask for an extra card if you have a count of 17 or higher, *ever*.
2. *Do not* ask for an extra card when you have a total of 12 or more if the dealer has a 2 through 6 showing in his or her "up" card.
3. *Ask* for an extra card or more when you have a count of 12 through 16 in your hand if the dealer's "up" card is a 7, 8, 9, 10, or ace.

There's a lot more to blackjack strategy than the above, of course. So consider this merely as the bare bones of the game. Blackjack is played with a single deck or with multiple decks; if you're looking for a single-deck game, your best bet is to head to a downtown casino.

A final tip: Avoid insurance bets; they're sucker bait!

CRAPS

The most exciting casino action is usually found at the craps tables. Betting is frenetic, play fast-paced, and groups quickly bond while yelling and screaming in response to the action.

THE POSSIBLE BETS

The craps table is divided into marked areas (Pass, Come, Field, Big 6, Big 8, and so on), where you place your chips to bet. The following are a few simple directions.

PASS LINE A "Pass Line" bet pays even money. If the first roll of the dice adds up to 7 or 11, you win your bet; if the first roll adds up to 2, 3, or 12, you lose your bet. If any other number comes up, it's your "point." If you roll your point again, you win, but if a 7 comes up again before your point is rolled, you lose.

DON'T PASS LINE Betting on the "Don't Pass" is the opposite of betting on the "Pass Line." This time, you lose if a 7 or an 11 is thrown on the first roll, and you win if a 2 or a 3 is thrown on the first roll.

If the first roll is 12, however, it's a push (standoff), and nobody wins. If none of these numbers is thrown and you have a point instead, in order to win, a 7 will have to be thrown before the point comes up again. A "Don't Pass" bet also pays even money.

COME Betting on "Come" is the same as betting on the Pass Line, but you must bet after the first roll or on any following roll. Again, you'll win on 7 or 11 and lose on 2, 3, or 12. Any other number is your point, and you win if your point comes up again before a 7.

DON'T COME This is the opposite of a "Come" bet. Again, you wait until after the first roll to bet. A 7 or an 11 means you lose; a 2 or a 3 means you win; 12 is a push, and nobody wins. You win if 7 comes up before the point. (The point, you'll recall, was the first number rolled if it was none of the above.)

FIELD This is a bet for one roll only. The "Field" consists of seven numbers: 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, and 12. If any of these numbers is thrown on the next roll, you win even money, except on 2 and 12, which pay 2 to 1 (at some casinos 3 to 1).

BIG 6 AND 8 A "Big 6 and 8" bet pays even money. You win if either a 6 or an 8 is rolled before a 7. Mathematically, this is a sucker's bet.

ANY 7 An "Any 7" bet pays the winner 5 for 1. If a 7 is thrown on the first roll after you bet, you win.

To play, you must first obtain a keno form, available at the counter in the keno lounge and in most Las Vegas coffee shops. In the latter, you'll usually find blank keno forms and thick black crayons on your table. Fill yours out, and a miniskirted keno runner will come and collect it. After the game is over, she'll return with your winning or losing ticket. If you've won, it's customary to offer a tip, depending on your winnings.

For those of you with state lotteries, this game will appear very familiar. You can select from 1 to 15 numbers (out of a total of 80) and if all of your numbers come up, you win. Depending on how many numbers you've selected, you can win smaller amounts if less than all of your numbers have come up. For example, if you bet a "3 spot" (selecting a total of three numbers) and two come up, you'll win something but not as much as if all three had shown up. A one-number mark is known as a 1-spot, a two-number selection is a 2-spot, and so on. After you have selected the number of spots you wish to play, write the amount you want to wager on the ticket, in the right-hand corner where indicated. The more you bet, the more you can win if your numbers come up. Before the game starts, you have to give the completed form to a keno runner, or hand it in at the keno lounge desk, and pay for your bet. You'll get back a duplicate form with the number of the game you're playing on it. Then the game begins. As numbers appear on the keno board, compare them to the numbers you've marked on your ticket. After 20 numbers have appeared on the board, the game is over, and if you've won, turn in your ticket to collect your winnings.

The more numbers on the board matching the numbers on your ticket, the more you win (in some cases, you get paid if *none* of your numbers comes up). If you want to keep playing the same numbers over and over, you can replay a ticket by handing in your duplicate to the keno runner; you don't have to keep rewriting it.

In addition to the straight bets described above, you can split your ticket, betting various amounts on two or more groups of numbers. It does get a little complex, as combination-betting options are almost infinite. Helpful casino personnel in the keno lounge can assist you with combination betting.

POKER

Poker is the game of the Old West. There's at least one sequence in every Western where the hero faces off against the villain over a poker hand. In Las Vegas, poker is just about the biggest thing going, thanks to the prevalence and popularity of celebrity poker TV shows, poker tours, books, magazines, and who knows what all. Just about every casino now has a poker room, and it's just a matter of time before the others catch up.

There are lots of variations on the basic game, but one of the most popular is **Hold 'Em**. Two cards are dealt face down to the players. After a betting round, five community cards (everyone can use them) are dealt face up on the table. Players makes the best five-card hand, using their own cards and the "board" (the community cards), and the best hand wins. The house dealer takes care of the shuffling and the dealing, and moves a marker around the table to alternate the start of the deal. The house takes 1% to 5% (it depends on the casino) from each pot. Most casinos also provide tables for playing Seven-Card Stud, Omaha High, and Omaha Hi-Lo. A few will even have Seven-Card Stud Hi-Lo split. To learn how these variations are played, either read a book or take lessons.

Warning: If you don't know how to play poker, don't attempt to learn at a table. Card sharks are not a rare species in Vegas; they will gladly feast on fresh meat (you!). Find a casino that provides free gaming lessons and learn, to paraphrase Kenny Rogers, when to hold 'em, and when to fold 'em.

PAI GOW POKER

Pai gow poker (a variation on poker) has become increasingly popular. The game is played with a traditional deck plus one joker. The joker is a wild card that can be used as an ace or to complete a straight, a flush, a straight flush, or a royal flush. Each player is dealt seven cards to arrange into two hands: a two-card hand and a five-card hand. As in standard poker, the highest two-card hand is two aces, and the highest five-card hand is a royal flush. The five-card hand *must* be higher than the two-card hand (if the two-card hand is a pair of sixes, for example, the five-card hand must be a pair of sevens or better). Any player's hand that is set incorrectly is an automatic loser. The object of the game is for both of the players' hands to rank higher than both of the banker's hands. Should one hand rank exactly the same as the banker's hand, this is a tie (called a "copy"), and the banker wins *all tie hands*. If the player wins one hand but loses the other, this is a "push," and no money changes hands. The house dealer or any player may be the banker. The bank is offered to each player, and each player may accept or pass. Winning hands are paid even money, less a 5% commission.

CARIBBEAN STUD POKER

Caribbean stud poker is yet another variation of poker that is gaining in popularity. Players put in a single ante bet and are dealt five cards face down from a single deck; they play solely against the dealer, who receives five cards, one of them face up. Players are then given the option of folding, or may call by making an additional bet that is double their original ante. After all player bets have been made, the dealer's cards are revealed. If the dealer doesn't qualify with *at least an ace-king combination*, players are paid even money on their ante and their call bets are returned. If the dealer does qualify, each player's hand is compared to the dealer's. On winning hands, players receive even money on their ante bets, and call bets are paid out on a scale according to the value of their hands. The scale ranges from even money for a pair, to 100 to 1 on a royal flush, although there is usually a cap on the maximum payoff, which varies from casino to casino.

An additional feature of Caribbean stud is the inclusion of a progressive jackpot. For an additional side bet of \$1, a player may qualify for a payoff from a progressive jackpot. The jackpot bet pays off only on a flush or better, but you can win on this bet even if the dealer ends up with a better hand than you do. Dream all you want of getting that royal flush and taking home the jackpot, but the odds of it happening are astronomical, so don't be so quick to turn in your resignation letter. Most veteran gamblers will tell you this is a bad bet (from a strict mathematical standpoint, it is), but considering that Caribbean stud already has a house advantage that is even larger than the one in roulette, if you're going to play, you might as well toss in the buck and pray.

LET IT RIDE

Let It Ride is another popular game that involves poker hands. You place three bets at the outset and are dealt three cards. The dealer is dealt two cards that act as community cards (you're not playing against the dealer). Once you've seen your cards, you can choose to pull the first of your three bets back or "Let It Ride." The object of this game is to get a pair of 10s or better by combining your cards with the dealer's. If you're holding a pair of 10s or better in your first three cards, you want to let your bets ride the whole way through. Once you've decided whether or not to let your first bet ride, the dealer exposes one of his or her two cards. Once again, you must make a decision to take back your middle bet or keep on going. Then the dealer exposes the last of his or her cards; your third bet must stay. The dealer then turns over the hands of the players

and determines whether you've won. Winning bets are paid on a scale, ranging from even money for a single pair up to 1,000 to 1 for a royal flush. These payouts are for each bet you have in play. Like Caribbean Stud, Let It Ride has a progressive jackpot that you can win for high hands if you cough up an additional dollar per hand, but be advised that the house advantage on that \$1 is obscene. But hey, that's why it's called gambling.

3-CARD POKER

3-Card Poker is rapidly gaining popularity, and now you'll find at least one table in most major Vegas casinos. It's actually more difficult to explain than to play. For this reason, we recommend watching a table for awhile. You should grasp it pretty quickly.

Basically, players are dealt three cards with no draw and have to make the best poker hand out of those three cards. Possible combinations include a straight flush (three sequential cards of the same suit), three of a kind (three queens for example), a straight (three sequential cards of any suit), a flush (three cards of the same suit), and a pair (two queens, for example). Even if you don't have one of the favored combinations, you can still win if you have cards higher than the dealer.

On the table you'll see three betting areas—the Ante, the Play, and the Pair Plus. There are actually two games in one on a 3-Card Poker table—"Pair Plus" and "Ante and Play." You can play only the Pair Plus or only the Ante or both. Place your chips in the areas you want to bet in.

In Pair Plus, you are betting only on your hand, not competing against anyone else at the table or the dealer. If you get a pair or better, depending on your hand, the payoff can be pretty fab—Straight Flush: 40 to 1, Three of a Kind: 30 to 1, Straight: 6 to 1, Flush: 3 to 1, Pair: 1 to 1.

In Ante and Play, you are betting that your hand will be better than the dealer's but are not competing against anyone else at the table. You place an Ante bet, view your cards, and then if you decide you like your hand, you place a bet in the Play area equal to your Ante bet. If you get lousy cards and don't want to go forward, you can fold, losing only your Ante bet and your Pair Plus bet, if you made one. Once all bets are made, the dealer's hand is revealed—he or she must have at least a single queen for the bet to count; if not, your Ante and Play bets are returned. If you beat the dealer's hand, you get a 1 to 1 payoff, but there is a bonus for a particularly good winning hand: Straight Flush: 5 to 1, Three of a Kind: 4 to 1, Straight: 1 to 1.

Your three cards are dealt. If you played only Pair Plus, it doesn't matter what the dealer has—you get paid if you have a pair or better. If you don't, you lose your bet. If you played the Ante bet, you must then either fold and lose the Ante bet or match the Ante bet by placing the same amount on the Play area. The dealer's hand is revealed and payouts happen accordingly. Each hand consists of one fresh 52-card deck.

Meanwhile, as if all this wasn't enough, new variations on table games keep popping up. The latest is Crazy 4 Poker—similar to 3-Card poker, only with five cards dealt, no draw, make your best 4-card poker hand out of it.

ROULETTE

Roulette is an extremely easy game to play, and it's really quite colorful and exciting to watch. The wheel spins and the little ball bounces around, finally dropping into one of the slots, numbered 1 to 36, plus 0 and 00. You can place bets "Inside" the table and "Outside" the table. Inside bets are bets placed on a particular number or a set of

"Phase Two" hotel addition will eventually adjoin the Shoppes at the far end of St. Mark's Square.

Oh, the shops themselves? The usual high- and medium-end brand names: Jimmy Choo, Mikimoto, Movado, Davidoff, Kenneth Cole, Ann Taylor, BCBG, bebe, Banana Republic, Rockport, and more, plus Venetian glass and paper shops. Madame Tussaud's waxworks (p. 197) is also located here, and so is the Canyon Ranch Spa Club.

4 Vintage Clothing

The Attic The Attic shares a large space with Cafe Neon, a coffeehouse that serves Greek-influenced cafe food (so you can raise your blood sugar after a long stretch of shopping), and a comedy-club stage; it's also upstairs from an attempt at a weekly club (as of this writing, the Sat-night Underworld). The store itself, former star of a Visa commercial, offers plenty of clothing choices on many racks. During a recent visit, a man came in asking for a poodle skirt for his 8-year-old. They had one. Open Monday through Thursday from 10am to 5pm, Friday from 10am to 6pm, Saturday from 11am to 6pm, and closed Sunday. 1018 S. Main St. ☎ 702/388-4088. www.theatticlasvegas.com.

Buffalo Exchange This is actually a branch of a chain of stores spread out across the western United States. If the chain part worries you, don't let it—this merchandise doesn't feel processed. Staffed by plenty of incredibly hip alt-culture kids (ask them what's happening in town during your visit), it is stuffed with dresses, shirts, pants, and so forth. You can easily go in one day and come out with 12 fabulous new outfits, but you can just as easily go in and come up dry. But it's still probably the most reliable of the local vintage shops. The store is open Monday through Saturday from 10am to 8pm, Sunday from 11am to 7pm. 4110 S. Maryland Pkwy. (at Flamingo Rd.). ☎ 702/791-3960. www.buffaloexchange.com.

Souvenirs

The Arts Factory Complex, 103 E. Charleston Blvd. (☎ 702/382-3886), has a gift shop full of pink flamingos and Vegas-specific items. There should be something here for every camp fancy.

If you prefer your souvenirs to be less deliberately ironic, head over to the **Bonanza Gift and Souvenir Shop**, 2460 Las Vegas Blvd. S. (☎ 702/384-0005). It's the self-proclaimed "World's Largest Gift Shop" and it certainly is big. T-shirts, Native American "handicrafts," all kinds of playing cards both new and used (casinos have to change decks frequently, so this is where used packs go), dice, things covered in rhinestones, snowglobes—in short, something for everyone, provided "everyone" has a certain sensibility. We looked, and we felt the tackiest item available was the pair of earrings made out of poker chips. The coolest? Some inexpensive, old-fashioned styled dice.

For reverent camp, encrusted with sequins, do take a peek at the **Liberace Museum gift store**, 1775 E. Tropicana Ave. (☎ 702/798-5595). Encourage them to get even more out there (don't you think they should add Liberace mouse pads and screen savers?).

If you like your souvenirs with more style (spoilsports), **Cirque de Soleil's O** has a gift shop in Bellagio, 3600 Las Vegas Blvd. S. (☎ 702/693-7444), with Cirque-specific articles, but also fanciful pottery, masks, and other curiosities.

6 Reading Material: Used Books, Comics & Gambler Books

USED BOOKS

Albion Books *Value* Six thousand square feet of used books, including first editions, vintage children's books, pop and sci-fi, pulp fiction, and bestsellers, both hard and paperback. You're welcome to take a seat and browse through your finds before purchasing. Open daily from 10am to 6pm. 2466 E. Desert Inn Rd. 702/792-9554.

Dead Fact Books *Finds* The dead poet in question was the man from whose estate the owners bought their start-up stock. He had such good taste in books that they "fell in love with him" and wanted to name the store in his memory. Just one problem—they never did get his name. So they just called him "the dead poet." His legacy continues at this book-lover's haven. Open 7 days a week from 10am to 6pm. 3874 W. Sahara Ave. (corner of Valley View, near Raley's Supermarket). ☎ 702/227-4070.

LAS VEGAS SPECIALTY BOOKSTORES

Gambler's Book Shop Here you can buy a book on any system ever devised to beat casino odds. Owner Edna Luckman carries more than 4,000 gambling-related titles, including many out-of-print books, computer software, and videotapes. She describes her store as a place where "gamblers, writers, researchers, statisticians, and computer specialists can meet and exchange information." On request, knowledgeable clerks provide on-the-spot expert advice on handicapping the ponies and other aspects of sports betting. The store's motto is "knowledge is protection." Open Monday through Saturday from 9am to 5pm, closed Sunday. 630 S. 11th St. (just off Charleston Blvd.). ☎ 800/522-1777 or 702/382-7555. www.gamblersbook.com.

Gamblers General Store A gambler's paradise stocked with a massive book collection, both antique and current slot machines, gaming tables (blackjack, craps, and so on), roulette wheels, collectible chips, casino dice, classic Vegas photos, and a ton of gaming-related souvenirs. Open daily from 9am to 5pm. 800 S. Main St. (Downtown). ☎ 800/322-2447 or 702/382-9903. www.gamblersgeneralstore.com.

COMIC BOOKS

Alternate Reality Comics The best place in Vegas for all your comic-book needs. They have a nearly comprehensive selection, with a heavy emphasis on underground comics. But don't worry—the superheroes are here, too. Open Monday through Saturday from 11am to 7pm, Sunday from noon to 6pm. 4800 S. Maryland Pkwy, Suite D. ☎ 702/736-3673.

7 Candy

M&M World *Kids* What can one do when faced with a wall of M&Ms in colors never before seen by man or woman (Purple! Teal! Lime green!)? Overpriced? Yeah! Who cares? There are doodads galore, replete with the M&M logo, and a surprisingly enjoyable short film and comedy routine, ostensibly about the "history" of the candy, but really just a cute little adventure with a decent budget behind it. Open Sunday through Thursday from 9am to midnight, Friday and Saturday from 9am to 1am. In the Showcase Mall, 3785 Las Vegas Blvd. S. (just north of the MGM Grand Hotel). ☎ 702/36-7611.